HISTORY OF SANGAM TAMILS – A STUDY

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the thesis entitled, **"HISTORY OF SANGAM TAMILS – A STUDY"** submitted by **Ms. S. ARUNADEVI,** Lecturer in History Government Arts College, Pudukkottai is a record of research work carried out by her for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History under my guidance. This thesis is an original work of the candidate and to the best of my knowledge has not been submitted in part or in full for any Diploma, Degree, Associateship, fellowship or other similar titles in this or any other University. No portion of the thesis is a reproduction from any other source, published or unpublished without acknowledgement.

Place : Melur

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled, **"HISTORY OF SANGAM TAMILS – A STUDY"** is the result of a study originally carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. S. Murugavel, Associate Professor of History, Government Arts College, Melur. This work has not been submitted earlier, in full or in part, for any Diploma, or Degree in this or any other University. I also declare that no part of the thesis is a reproduction from any other sources, published or unpublished without acknowledgement.

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PREFACE

The present doctoral thesis entitled **“HISTORY OF SANGAM TAMILS – A STUDY”** makes an attempt to analyse and discuss the history of the early Tamils. Sangam period is considered as the Golden age of Tamils. Here an attempt is made to study the Age of Sangam political structure, Administrative system, Kings and chieftains, Social life, Role of Education Religious life and Festivals and Trade and commerce.

I extend my profound thanks to my Supervisor and Guide Dr. S. Murugavel, Associate Professor of History, Government Arts College, Melur, Madurai for his constant encouragement, assistance and valuable suggestions for the successful completion of the thesis.

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CONTENTS

of families constituted the different striates of the Tamil society. Hence House hold life of the Tamil People played a vital role in the development of Tamil Culture. The Supreme philosophy of life as conceived by the Tamils clearly expressed in one the verses of Purananuru the ancient Tamil classics. Every country is my country. Every man is my Kins man.

CHAPTER - I

THE AGE OF THE SANGAM

The determination of the age of the Sangam had created a chronological Conundrum. Diverse are the views expressed by Scholars. There are atleast three schools of thought. One depending the traditions of the commentator of Iraiyanar Kalaviyal, takes the age of the Sangam, much an anterior date across archaeological ages to the surprise of archaeologists and dismay of historians. The second school guided by the nineteenth century racial and linguistic theories saw in the origin of Tamil script, literature, conventions and institutions a Sanskritic influence, inspiration for even parenthood and brought down the age of Sangam to eighth to tenth centuries after Christ. The third school attempts an objective approach to settle the problem and various authors of this school fix a period from fifth century B. C. to fifth Century A.D., or various stages with in this time span of one thousand years.

Among the third school, there are atleast three divisions, one for a thousand years life span from fifth century B.C. to fifth century A. D., the second for about five hundred years from second century B. C. to third century A.D., or with a little more at the upper or lower limit and the third for about three centuries after Christ, some including others excluding the first century after Christ. Of all the schools of thought, the third branch of the third school had gained the acceptance of scholars at national

and international levels. They believe that it has relevancy to the cultural sequence and enough interval for the cultural emergence and linguistic formation in between the archaeological cultures and the classical age. According to the judgements delivered by the archaeologists, the megalitheans, the Tamil speaking ancestors of the authors of the Sangam civilization, entered Tamil Country via north-west from Iran or Eastern Mediterranean[2] with the intrusive element iron, the stimuli for cultural transfusion at about third century B.C, according to their original judgment. But, now after further enlightment taken the date back and placed it to cover a period from 10th century B.C to 5th Century B.C.[3]

In their view, the three centuries before Christ while civilization was flourishing in other parts of India, China, Egypt and Rome, the Tamils were in the formative period of their culture and were partially relinquishing their tribalism.[4] The famous epigraphist Dani's "observation[5] that writing trickled down the barbarous caves of south, is one example of the general line of thinking at wider levels.

This kind of thinking demonstrates how, an imperfect work of archaeology in conjunction with imperfect understanding of the literary heritages of India can jeopardize the correct understanding of the cultural heritage of the ancient Societies of India. To make matters worse, depending on a fifteenth century A.D. classification of the early literary products as eight collection, ten songs and eighteen didactics by Mailainather and without a perfect stratification as done by Maxmuller to Vedic

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2 Mortimer Wheeler E., **Early Indian and Pakistan,** London,1959, p.163, Christoph von Furer Haimendorf.**"When, how and from where did the Dravidians come to India?"** Indo Asian Culture, ii, No. 3 Delhi, January 1954, pp. 238-247; same author **"New aspects of Dravidian Problem",** Tamil Culture, No. 2 1953 pp. 127-135; Nayar T. B., "The Problem of Dravidian Origins" (Madras, 1877; P.12; Nilakanda Sastri K.A., **History of South India and Cultural contacts-Aryan and Dravidians,** oxford 1955, p.3

3 Nagasamy R., Imachinnangal, Archaeological Hand Book Madras, 1968 pp. 108-111.

4 Suvira Jaiswal, "studies in the social structure of the early Tamils Indian Society-Historical probings", p.145; **Narayanan Manyar M.G.S., "Problem in Sangam literature",** journal of Indian History Vol. LIII part 2, 1975), p. 243, N. Subramaniam, **Sangam Polity,** P.U.P. London 1980, p. 63.

5 Veluppillai A., for quoted Dani in **Epigraphical evidences for Tamil Studies,** I.I.T. Studies, Madras, 1980, p.14.

literature and using the heaped up literature of the early period, speculative judgements, on the age of the Sangam, have been passed, each challenging the rest and none capable of giving a perfect and permanent solution to fix the age of the Sangam. On account of this failure, a correct understanding of the cultural heritage of the Tamils of the pre-Christian era has been kept in darkness and literary heritage of the ancient Tamils exposed to debate placing Tolkappiyam posterior to the anthologies in the early Pallava period.[6] Hence a reassessment and rediscovery of the age of the Sangam is an imperative necessity.

The first reference to the story of the Sangam and its approximate period of existence appeared in the commentary to Iraiyanar Akapporul.[7] According to the commentator there existed three Sangams in the successive Pandiya capitals for a total period of 9990 years. As this vast period invades even the lithic ages by millenniums, archaeologists and historians raised their brows, and the story has been dismissed as a figment of imagination. K.N.Sivarajapillai considered it as a product of the "fabulising imagination of a later scholar" and a "daring literary forgery" Yet according to Dr. K.K. Pillai[8] the tradition is persistant[9] and the entire story cannot be a fiction, though fact and fiction are mixed up; tradition arise out of some base behind Velvikkudi grant an archaeological source supply a hint; Pliny[10] and Mahabharatha[11] supply evidence for the shifting of the capital of Pandyas; and therefore the story cannot be totally dismissed as a fiction. The total number of 449 poets attributed to the third Sangam in the

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6 Basham A.L., The Wonder That Was India, London, 1954, p.462; Hart G.L., "Ancient Tamil Literature; Its scholarly past and future" in essays, on South India, (ed) Burton Stein, Vykas, 1975 p.41, Chatterji S.K., "Old Tamil, Ancient Tamil and Premitive Dravidian" in Tamil Calcutta, 1956, p.13, K.N. Sivarajapillai, The Chronology of the early Tamils Madras, 1932, p.44, Vaiyapuripillai S, "History of the Tamil Language and Literature, T. C. Vol. III, 1954, p. 242.

7 Iraiyanar Akapporul, Saiva Siddantha Kazhakam (Pub), Madras, 1969, p.242.

8 op.cit., p.19.

9 Pillay K.K., **"Historical Ideas in Early Tamil Literature"**, T.C., Vol. 6, 1967 p. 114.

10 Velvikudi grant, Parv, IX. 36.

11 Warmington, Commerce Between Roman Empire and India, Cambridge 1928, P. 167.

commentary is nearer according to the compulation of the Samajam edition and the Hand book to Second International Conference of Tamil Studies. At least two out of the many books referred to by the early Commentaors have been recovered from oblivion recently. Some of the names mentioned in the Kalaviyal commentary have appeared in inscriptions. Hence in the absence of marine archaeology, it is too early to dismiss the commentators version of the story of the Sangam into as fictitious or literary forgery.

Traditional School

The votaries of the first school (traditionalist) treat the Akapporul Commentary in toto as a historical document. Thudisaikkilar Chidambaranar distributed the entire period of 9990 years adding one hundred years more at different stages from fifteen millennium B.C. to first millennium A.D. Weaving the literary traditions across the warp i.e. astronomy and Geology, he placed the first Sangam between 14004 B.C. and 9564 B.C. with Southern Madurai as its seat, the Second Sangam between 6805 B.C. and 3105 B.C. with Kapadapuram as its seat and the third between 1715 B.C. and 235 A.D. With Madurai as its seat.[12]

He also believes the existence of four prior academic ages before 14004 B.C. Devaneya Pavanar takes a different course and approximates the first Sangam between 10.000 B.C. and 5500 B.C. second between 4000 B.C. and 1500 B.C. and the third between fifth century B.C. to fourth century A.D. No evidence is given. V.K. Suriyanarayna Sastri distributes the entire 9990 years in continuity terminating at 100A.D. Inclusive of the Epics he added 500 years more at the lower end.[13] P.T. Srinivasa Aiyangar too treats legend as history.[14]

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[12] Cherar Varalaru Saiva Siddantha Kazhakam (Pub); Tamil Sangankalin Varalaru, Madras Reprint, 1967, pp.52-62, 70-89, 100.

[13] Raghava Iyengar R. Tamilvaralaru, Madras, 1952, pp.245-249.

[14] Srinivasa Iyengar P.T. History of the Tamils, Madras, 1929, pp.111-113.

Justice Damodharan Pillai, the learned editor of Tolkappiyam, Virasoliyam, Kalithogai and other works considers a period from 10150 B.C. to 150 B.C. as the academic period of the Tamils. The scholars of the traditionalist school failed to cull out historical elements from the legends and failed to establish the age of the Sangam with Corroborative evidences.

The Second School

The second school takes a different approach and goes to the opposite extreme. The chief voteries of this school are Robert Caldwell, L.D. Swamikkannupillai and N.P. Chakravarthi. Robert Caldwell, who completed his monumental work on Dravidian Philology in 1856 was carried away by the linguistic and racial theories of the German philologists of the 19th century. Banking faith on the supremacy of Sanskrit and thinking the language of the south as mere dialects of Sanskrit, joined hands with Burnell he placed the earliest literary period of Tamils at 9th and 10th centuries[15] A.D., on palaeographical grounds.[16] The learned Bishop was not only misled but in turn also misguided the English writers on Tamil literature like Dr. Grierson, Dr. Rost and Frazer by his writings.

They in turn propagated Caldwell's erroneous theories in the western world. Caldwell's theories faced the pungent criticism of Prof. Sundaram Pillai through his work, "Some Milestones in the History of Tamil Literature". L.D. Swamikkannu Pillai, based on the astronomical data found in Nedunelvadai[17] Kudalur Kilar's puram[18] and Silappadikaram[19] placed the age of the Sangam at 8th century A.D., thinking that the

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15 Ibid., pp. 232-236.

16 Robert Caldwell, **A Comparative Grammar of Dravidian and South Indian Family of Languages,** (Madras 1961, pp. xi, 67.

17 Nedunalvadai, Lines, 160-162.

18 Puram, 229.

19 Kadukankathai, 1-3, and Katturai, 133-137.

knowledge of zodiac came to south, very late, as Sanskrit literature had not referred to zodiac and the planetory horoscopes till third century A.D.[20]

It is the general belief and faith that the Sanskrit authors of astronomical treatises depended their knowledge of zodiac and the seven day week on the Greeks. But Rev. Ebeneser Burgess who translated the Surya Siddhanta, negatived their opinion on Greek source. According to him the greatest contribution to astronomy was made by the Babylonians and not the Greeks. The Indians developed their rasi astronomy in their own way according to Mahamahopadhyaya P.V. Kane. In the period of assimilation of native thought, the Sanskrit astronomers had consulted the Nadis (Nadinool). The Nadis were store houses of knowledge on celestial bodies.[21] Indologists had neglected the Dravidian tradition and in the Dravidian names for sun, moon and planets there is nothing Sanskritic in them. The stray references to astronomical elements made in the early Tamil literature[22] has to be taken as the remnants of knowledge on astronomy preserved in Nadis, now lost to posterity. The early Tamil musicology too is linked to well developed astronomy.[23]

L.D. Swamikkannu Pillai based his calculations on wrong premise. From the Silambu data, V.R.R. Dikshithar had read the period to be belonging to second century A.D. It has relevance to Gajabahu Senguttuvan Synchronism.

Dr. N.P. Chakravarthi, former Director General of Archaeology, in the light of his knowledge on the writing pattern of early cave inscriptions of Tamil country, rules out the existence of any classical period for Tamil language before sixth century A.D.[24] The caves were intended for Jain or Buddhist mendicants. The incomplete sentences of

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[20] Swamikkannu Pillai L.D., The Indian Exphemeris, Vol.I, Part i, p.496.

[21] Badrinarayanan, **"Illustrated Weekly of India"** Sep. 7-13, 1980, p.19.

[22] Puram 2, 229; Nedunelvadai; 160-162 Silambu, Kadukankathai 1-3, Katturai 133-37 etc.

[23] Koothanool, Panchamarapu and Silambu Arakerrukathai.

[24] Presidential Address, Indian History Congress, Ahmedabad, 1954.

donative nature were incised by commoners unlike the text of the medieval inscriptions which were composed by poets.
N.P. Chakravarthi was unfortunately not aware that from sixth century A.D. commenced the Pallava age in political history and Devaram age in literary history.

Three Branches of the Third School

The third school which has more subscribers is objective in their approach. M. Srinivasa Iyengar finds the Akapporul story a trife. He assigned a period of one thousand years from 500 B.C. to 500 A.D. for the period of Academies. He allowed a marginal period beyond the upper limit ie. 500 B.C. for the literary composition preceding the academic period.[25] V. R. R. Dikshithar assigned one thousand years from 500 B. C. to 500 A.D. for the Sangam Age.[26] By calculating the astronomical data found in the Silumbu, he advanced the period by six centuries than the findings of L.D. Swamikkannu pillai.

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[25] Srinivasa Iyengar M., Tamil Studies, Madras, 1914, pp 212-213.

[26] Ramachandra Dikshitar V.R., Studies in the Tamil Literature and History, Madras, 1936.

He regarded South as a separate unit by itself from geological and historical times and Dravidian languages especially Tamil had developed independent of Sanskrit. K.G. Sesha Iyer[27] and K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar taking the line of V.R.R. Dikshithar assigned the same date, 500 B.C. to 500 A.D. as the extreme limits.

Dr. K.K. Pillay, giving partial assent to the Akapporul tradition believes in the existence of three Sangams, but rejected the high antiquity. Banking upon the Gajabahu Senguttuvan Synchronism and the Indo Roman Sources[28] accepted the probability of the existence of third Sangam between first and third centuries B.C.[29] Taking it as the basic substratum of the Chronology of the early Tamils, reckoned backwards, placed the Second Sangam at first and second centuries B.C and the first Sangam at the third and fourth centuries B.C. In his opinion Tolkappiyam belonged to a period not earlier than second century B.C.[30] The two earlier Epics are kept outside the corpus of Sangam literature and assigned 4th and 5th centuries A.D. to them.[31] Fr. Xavier, S. Thaninayagam placed the anthologies and the Epics between 200 B.C. and 300 A.D.[32]

Dr. N. Subramanian who did intensive work on Sangam Polity, Culture and Civilization noticed a cultural continuity in Tamil Nadu from the period of the foundation of the Mauryan Empire. He held "that the entire body of eight anthologies (Ettuttogai). the Ten Idylls (Pattuppattu) and the 18 minor works (Padinenkilkanakku) and the two epics (Silappadikaram and Manimekalai) belong to the Pre-Pallavan period,[33] that is to the few centuries immediately preceding and following the Christian

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27 Sehsha Iyer K.G., Cera Kings of the Sangam Period, Madras, 1970, pp. 97-122.

28 Pillay K.K., Op.cit., p. 114.

29 Ibid, p. 106.

30 Pillay K.K., Social History of the Tamils, Madras, 1980, pp. 93-100.

31 Pillay K.K., T.C. Op.cit., p.118.

32 "Subramanian N., Educators of Tamil Society", T.C. 1956, p.105.

33 **The Sangam Polity,** Op.cit., pp. 25, 32.

era. Tolkappiyam belongs to an age slightly earlier"[34]. But the learned scholar has differed in his own conclusions on the age of the Sangam.

[34] Ibid., p. 25.

In the same work "Sangam Polity", at one stage he regarded the early centuries of the Christian era as the age of the Sangam.[35]

Finally, he held that the entire mass of the Sangam literature covers a period of three or four generations or about two hundred years before fourth century A.D.[36] Dr. N. Subramanian who noticed a cultural continuity in the Tamil Country from the period of the foundation of the Mauryan empire[37] in the fourth century B.C. and who located the age of the anthologies, didactics and epics centuries before and after Christ was misled and disillusioned with the erroneous equation of Velkelu Kuttuvan of Pathittuppattu and Cheran Senguttuvan of Silappadikaram and confined the age of the entire mass of the Sangam literature to three or four generations.

While the strange notions of Caldwell and Burnell were reigning the intellectual world and the Sangam studies were at its initial stages, materials at hand were scanty, Kanakasabhai made his attempt to throw light on the Augustan age of the Tamils, through a series of papers from 1895, later published under the caption "Tamils Eighteen Hundred years Ago". He was the first to bring the Gajabahu, Senguttuvan, Satakarni Synchronism as the foundation for fixing the age of the Sangam. He fixed the age of Gajabahu of Ceylon between 113 A.D. and 125 A.D. and placed the age of the Sangam at the early centuries of the Christian era.[38] He did not direct his investigation to the period before fifty A.D. His views on the Sangam age was taken as authoritative by eminent historians like V.A. Smith, L.D. Barnett and R.C. Majumdar. His calculations of the age of the Sangam is guiding the scholars ever since, though his work is incomplete and is suffering from a serious flaw in equating Velkelu Kuttuvan, the hero of the fifth decade of Pathittuppattu with Senguttuvan of Silappadikaram. The mistake

[35] op. cit., p.27.

[36] Ibid. p. 28.

[37] op. cit, p. 25.

[38] Kanakasabbai Pillai V., Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago, Madras, 1904, p. 8.

was originally committed by the compiler or later scribe and over sighted by all including Kanakasabhai.

R.Raghava Iyangar, placing Elalan's period between 205 and 16l B.C. and Gajabahu I of Ceylon between 111 A.D and 133 A.D and linking both assigned 350 years as the age of the third Sangam.[39] According to Dr. T.P. Meenakshi Sundram the "Earliest literature available is attributed to the third academy or Sangam, probably beginning before the Christian era and continuing; upto the end of the third century A.D."[40] He placed Tolkappiyam at the earlier part of the first millennium B.C.[41]

K. N. Sivaraja Pillai who attempted to "settle the vexed question of Tamil chronology", which he claimed to have absolutely fixed[42] was methodical in approach, attempted stratification of the literature keeping in view the supremacy of Sanskrit, brought Ainkurunuru, Kalittokai and Paripadal as the works of lower strata,[43] of Sangam literature placed the epics at sixth century A.D., and kept the didactics in between the anthologies and the epics. He placed Tolkappiyam three centuries after purananuru. But he had not worked out the chronological order of the poets and their songs who were widely separated in time and space. However, he succeeded in locating the existence of two Karikalas. He kept the Chola[44] line of Kings belonging to ten generations as the central core of his working chronology, dismissed the Gajabahu Senguttuvan Synchronism as a fragile element to count upon, created a new Synchronism with Ptolemy, Aye Andiron and Pasumpon Pandiyan. Keeping Karikala, the Second at the intermediary stage following an ascending and decending process, fixed

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[39] Raghava Iyengar R., Op.cit., P. 41.

[40] Menakshi Sundarm.T.P., Tamil, A Birds Eye View, Madurai, 1976, p. 3.

[41] Puranalingam Pillai M.S., History of Tamil Literature Hyderabad, 1965, p. 11.

[42] Sivaraja Pillai K.N., Chronology of Ancient Tamils, Madras, 1932, p.161.

[43] Ibid., 41, 44.

[44] Op.cit., p. 170

50 B.C. as the date of commencement of the rule of the Chola line of first generation and 200 A.D. as the end of the rule of the Chola line of the 10th generation. This period of 250 years he held to be the age of Sangam. His equation of the period of Aye Andiran with that of Pasumpon Pandian has no historical, literary or even evidence from tradition. As and when the author of this chronology accepted that his equation of Pasumpon Pandiyan with Aye Andiran is arbitrary[45] the chronology, claimed to have been proved beyond doubt and soaring so high, lost its fell to the ground and broken to dust.

Approach of the linguists

After K.N. Sivarajapillai, S. Vaiyapuripillai had made a systematic study on a general stratification of the Sangam works to fix the age of the Sangam. His approach was methodical. But he had drawn some premises keeping in view, the writings of the early cave inscriptions of Tamil Nadu, astronomical elements found in Nedunelvadai Sanskrit etymology, religious and social ideals-found in the early Tamil works which according to latest analysis are questionable. He drew the following premises before fixing the date of the Sangam. The Dravidian dynasties known to Megasthenese and Katyayana in the 4th Century B.C had high antiquity. Their successors in the second century B.C adopted Brahmi script for purposes of writing.[46] There was no written literature for Tamil before 3rd century B.C. and it took shape only after its oral existence. The written language was in its formative stage during the first and second centuries B.C

Therefore he concluded that no poet of the Sangam age was earlier than second century A.D.[47] and that the early Sangam literature flourished from second century A.D.

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[45] S. Vaiyapuripillai S., Tamil ***Sudarmanikal,*** Madras, 1949, p. 332.

[46] Ibid, p. 341.

[47] Op.cit., p. 357.

to third century A.D. That was the genuine Sangam period according to him. He placed Nedunalvadai of Nakkirar at third century A.D. He excluded Paripadal and Kali of the Eight Anthologies, Thirumurugattuppadai of Pattuppattu, 18 didactics, the two early epics and Tolkappiam at 600 A.D. Taking note of the etymological variations, differences in poetics between Tolkappiyam and the Anthologies, the learned scholar held that Tolkappiyam succeeds the anthologies with a time distance of three centuries.[48] He placed Tolkappiyam at the. 5th century A.D. For giving a posterior dating to Tolkappiyam, he brought the age of Kautilya to 3rd century A.D.[49] The Etymological dictionary of Dravidian Languages by the Professors of Sanskrit, Burrow and Emeneau, Literary History of Sanskrit by Burrow[50], G.L. Hart's recent researches[51]. S.K. Chatterji's Studies in the fare race movements and cultural evolution in early India[52] supplies sufficient materials to remove the hallucination of the protalgooists of Sanskrit about the massive impact of Sanskrit and Vedic thought over the early Tamil literature. Hence Vaiyapuripillai's pet conclusions have, now, no peg to hang. Yet scholars at national, and international levels who depend Kanakasabhai's dating for the age of the Sangam, are guided by S. Vaiyapuripillai's theories relating to the corpus of the Sangam literature.

M. Raghava Iyengar limits the entire corpus of the Sangam literature to the life span of Cheran-Senguttuvan and fixes the age of the Sangam at 5th century A.D.[53] By the General flaw of mixing Velkelukuttuvan and Cheran Senguttuvan[54], the learned

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48 Ibid., p. 51.

49 Burrow T., The Sanskrit Language, “Loan Words in Sanskrit”, Collected Papers, Annamalainagar, 1968, pp. 284, 285.

50 “Related Cultural and Literary, Elements in Acient Tamil and Indo Aryan’ Ph.D. Dissertation, Harward University, 1969

51 Majumdar R.(ed), Race Movement and Prehistoric Culture, in vedic Age Bombay, 1965, pp. 162 – 618.

52 Cheran Senguttuvan (Tamil) Valluvar Pannai (Pub), 5th ed, Madras, 1964, p. 197.

53 Raghava Iyangar, Ibid, p. 9

54 Nilakanda Sastri K.A., **The Colas,** Madras, 1975, p.3.

author had mixed up the relatives' of the two great heroes and found a wider span of time to accommodate the entire corpus of Sangam literature to a single generation. K.A.N. Sastri who assigned the early centuries of the Christian era[55] as the period of compositions of the early litetature, excluding the Epics, had limited the age of the Sangam to five or six generation covering a period of 150 years from 100 A.D, on the strength of Gajabahu Senguttuvan Synchronism, keeping the reigning period of Gajabahu between 173 A.D.[56] Falling in line with S. Vaiyapuripillai he excluded Paripadal, Kalittogai (of Eight Anthologies) and Thirumurugarruppadai (of Ten Idylls) from the corpus of Sangam literature.[57] Recently, an American scholar from the University of Wisconsin after a comparative study of the ancient Tamil and Sanskrit literatures, placed the six of the Eight Anthologies (excluding Paripadal and Kalittogai) at the second and third centuries A.D., Kalittogai, Paripadal and Pattuppattu were placed at a period a little later and Tolkappiyam at fifth century A.D.[58] Though his work is original in approach and treatment, he is unable to relieve himself completely from the impact of the line of thinking of Prof, S.Vaiyapuripillai.

The theories on the age of the Sangam assessed so far suffer from one or the other of the following serious misconceptions or errors.

Evaluation of the Three Schools of Thought

1. The indifference shown to the political situation in the Tamil Country during the second, third and fourth centuries had compelled many scholars to transplant the age of the Sangam over the Kalabhra and early Pallava age in the history of Tamil Nadu. Even the lower Strata of Anthologies present a political situation of a different and

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[55] Balasubramanian S., **History of South India**, Madras, 1973 p. 187

[56] Sastri K.A.N., (ed) A Comprehensive History of India, Vol. 2; Bombay, 1957, p. 503.

[57] Hart G.L., "Ancient Tamil Literature; Its Scholary Past and Future" in Essays on South India, (ed) Burton Strein Vykas, 1975, p. 41.

[58] Journal of Madras University. Vol. LI, No. 1 Jan, 1979, off print, p. 25.

ancient type. During the last phase of the Sangam age, the princes were masters of the fertile valleys with their main and subordinate capitals along the commercial routes. Their capitals were commercial cities unlike the temples cities of the later ages. The activities of Yavana merchants were more at the coastal as well as the capital cities of the Tamil monarchs during this period. The Roman coins of Tiberius (14 A.D, to 37 A.D.) Caligula (37-41 A.D.), Claudius (A.D. 41 to54 A.D.) Nero (A.D. 54-68), Vespasian (A.D. 69-79), with a little break, Titus to Hadrian (79-138 A.D.) with the final breakage from133, A.D. found in the then Tamil Nadu substantiate it. According to the political situation figure in the early epics, Ilanthirayan, Cheraladan and Ariyappadaikadantha Neduncheliyan, Senkuttuvan were kept at close proximity. At the closing period of the Sangam age and at its periphery according to the political picture presented in Manimekalai, Pukar continued to be the Chola capital with Nedumudikkilli as the ruler. His brother Ilam Killi was at Kanchi. Thondaiman Ilanthirayan also figure at Kanchi. Seliyan, the Pandya ruler was at Madurai with his subordinate capital Korkai. The importance of Vanchi, the Chera capital continued without break.

It is widely accepted that the Kalabhra interlude commenced in the third century A.D Arunachalam in his paper on the Kalabhras[59] held that, Kalabhra rule started in the Pandinadu from 250 A.D. It shows that they had occupied the northern parts of the Tamil Country still earlier. The nature of the Kalabhra rule is hinted in Velvikkudi grant. From the third century A.D., Kanchi in Tondainadu, Kaverippattinam in Cholanadu, Madurai in Pandinadu, all in the fertile river valleys were in the occupation of invading tribes from the North. Their language was not Tamil. They used a corrupted form of Pali with Sanskrit admixture for purposes of administration[60] and as the language of religion.

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[59] Tamil Valarchi Kazhagam (Pub), Ten Pandya Copper Plates, Velvikkudi Grant. AM 139 Madras, 1967, pp.11-40

[60] Xavier Thaninayagam, **'Earliest Jain and Buddhist Teachings in Tamil Country',** T.C, Madras, 1959, Vol. III No.4, pp 337 – 342.

Their religion was neither Vedic nor local form of Hinduism, known during the age of Sangam or Pallava period. Buddhist scholars of Theravada Buddhism dominated Kanchi in the third century A.D. Dinnaga who lived in the 3rd and 4th centuries was a Mahayanist Yogacarica teacher.[61] The role of Dharmapala, Bodhi dhamma and Buddhadatta are well known. These had totally erased the panegyric and anthropacentric age of the anthologies and set at motion a predominantly philosophical and didactic age, characteristic feature reflected in the post Sangam works.[62] The Social curtain which presented the picture of war, heroism and love diminished, giving place to the one presenting the picture of mediating mendicants and arguing philosophers at Pattimandapas.

[61] Ibid, T.C. 1956, p.107.

[62] Sircar D.C., **The Successors of Satavahanas,** pp. 164 -166

Again on the political scene at Kanchi, the rule of Simhava raman around 300 A.D.[63] or 325 A.D.[64] is established on the analysis of the early Prakrit charters of the Paliavas.[65] Around 350 A.D. one Vishugopa met the Gupta forces at Kanchi according to Allahabad Pillar Inscription.[66] The British museum plates of queen Charu Devi, Vijaya Skanda Varman, Buddha-varman and Buddhayankura were ruling from Kanchi in the fourth century A.D. Not a single atom of reference to the above can be noticed anywhere in the collections, Songs or in the epics. The second serious misconception, that had vitiated the correct understanding of the cultural attainments of the early Tamils, is the incomplete nature of the investigation of the megalithic monuments and the Nilgiris and Adichanalloor bronzes and their dating. The megalithic sites experimented so far is very meagre. But the judgements awarded on them has universal application with far reaching implications. They declared that the iron using intruders with Tamil speaking tongue entered Tamil Country at about 300 B.C.[67] This thought process in conjection with the notions on the origins of orthography had created a disjunction in the cultural evolution which otherwise had a cultural continuity and stability of population.

The archaeologists fail to keep their eyes on the overall picture. In their preoccupation with the trees they lost sight of the woods. Now after compulsive evidences the process of predating the megalithic culture is at work[68]. The archaeologists have oversighted the conservative nature of the Dravidian culture, the fact of overlap between the Neolithic cum Chalcolithic cultures and Megalithic culture;

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63 Heras H., Studies in Pallava History, Madras, 1933, pp. 9 - 22

64 Epicgraphia, Indica XXI, pp. 87 - 90

65 Corpus Inscriptionamum Indicanum, Vol. VII. p. 6. Subramanian N., **History of TamilNadu, Madurai,** 1976, p. 115.

66 Mortimer Wheeler, op. cit. p.163

67 Clarence Maloney, "Archaeology in South India Accomplishments and Prospect" in Essay on South India, (ed) Burton Stein, p. 9; R. Nagasamy, Ibid, pp. 108 - 111

68 Shunmugam, Kodumudi, S., "Palaeography" Heritage of the Tamils: Language and Grammar, Madras, 1980, pp. 8 – 9.

the appearance of greyware as well as copper age elements in TamilNadu sites. Archaeological anthropology showing the uniformity in the physical types of builders of Neolithic and Megalithic cultures speak for the stability of population. The theory of the introduction of Tamil by an iron using intruding population had already been ruled out.[69] These factors in conjection with the basis substratum of linguistic and religious elements in Vedic literature compel us to inform that the performance of archaeology is incomplete, and the conclusions reached at an incomplete stage of investigation are misleading.

3. The Third serious defect that vitiated the correct understanding of the literary history of Tamil is the misinterpretations of the scripts found in the early cave inscriptions of Tamil Nadu. The epigraphists held that the Tamil language had no scripts till third century B.C. and therefore there was no possibility of developed literature before Christ. The earliest inscriptions, found in the Pandya Country Arickamedu fragment inscriptions,[70] and the inscriptions found in other parts of the Tamil Country are in Tamil language according to Krishna Sastry and A.V. Subramania Iyer. Iravatham Mahadevan who attempted a second reading of the Arikkamedu Inscriptions reasserted the language to be Tamil[71]. Though the language is Tamil due to the 19th Century linguistic theories and the Semblance of the scripts to Asokan Brahmi, the epigraphists believed that the scripts, reached TamilNadu, in the 3rd century B.C, with the arrival of Asoka's misssionaries. The epigraphists over sighted two important factors before arriving at their hasty conclusions.

(i) They have over sighted Graffiti handled by ordinary men in every day life relating to Asokan, Pre Asokan and post Asokan times. Their premise that the first written documents are in stone alone is erroneous. The use of palm leaf and evolu-

[69] Proceedings and Transactions of Third All India Oriental Conference, Madras, 1924, pp. 275 – 300.

[70] Tamilica (1973), Vol. II, Part 3, pp. 60 – 64.

[71] A. Velupillai, op. cit. p. 10.

tionary process are ignored. Both Sangam literary compositions and early grammatical works should have been written in manuscripts earlier than the inscriptions in question[72] (ii) The epigraphists again oversight the marked differences in the scripts employed in the Southern inscriptions. They have ignored the frequency of 1.l,r and n .(o> s> w> d) and the absence of the hard consonants in the inscriptions south of Bhattiprolu.[73]

These differences establish that the southern scripts are different from Asokan Brahmi and bore the name Damili while the northern ones are called Bombi according to the Jain Suttas.[74] When Bombi by displacement of vowel became Brahmi[75] during the period of Lalithavisthara, the Buddhist work, the Southern scripts bore the name Dravida lipi.

The Korkai excavations conducted by the State Department of Archaeology brought to light,[76] scripts dating 9th to 8th centuries B.C. similar to those found on rock and pottery mixed up with the characters resembling Indus scripts. It reinforces the evolutionary theory of B.B. Lai.[77] The discovery of similar characters in the Island of Sri Lanka[78] of Pre-Asokan and Asokan times in conjection with Chalcolithic crossings in TamilNadu suggests the extension of Harappan culture at a wider area. The discovery of a bilingual metal soal at Sri Lanka bearing Tamil scripts and pictograms believed that conclusions of the Brahmi origin of Damili Scripts. The differences of southern and

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72 Mahalingam T.V., South Indian Palaeography, Madras, 1980, p. 138.

73 Samavayanga Sutta and Pannavansutta, Quoted, Ibid. p. 110.

74 ghk;gp> g;h; mk;gp; g;h; Mk;gp = g;uhk;gp (g-k) = g;uhk;kp.

75 Shunmugam, Kodumudi, op. cit., pp. 455 - 465

76 "From the Megalithic to the Harappan; Tracing Back the Graffiti on Pottery", A16, 1960, pp. 1.24

77 Kanagarthnam, D.J. Tamil and cultural pluralism in Ancient Sri Lanka, (Pilimtalawe, 1978) p. 26; Karunaratna, 'Palaeographics Development of the Brahmi script of Ceylon' First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, Kaula Lumpur, 1966; J.T. Xavier, The Land of Letters Trincomalee, 1977, pp. 155 - 174

78 Mahendale M.A., "Language and Literature" in the age of Imperial Unity,(ed) Majumdar R.C., Bombay, 1968, p. 268, 282.

northern varities of scripts amidst semblances suggest the common origin of Damili, the script of the south and Brahmi, the Script of the North.

4. The fourth factor which misled the scholars is the illusions on the massive impact of Vedic thought and Sanskrit etymology in Sangam literature.

The literary history of Sanskrit before the age of the Gupta's is interpreted with a tinge of vagueness. The linguistic theory of Monier Williams has not been re-interpreted even after the epoch making discovery of 1922 in Indian History. Panini wrote a grammar for Bhasha i.e. the spoken language. When compared to the Prathisakiyas it is artificial in character. At the time of the Brahmanas, before Panini, there were three major spoken language groups, Udicha (N.W.) Madhyadesiya (C.I.) and Prachya (E.I.)[79].

In the fifth century B. C. Buddha preached in the languages of the masses which was later known by the common term Prakrit. The Jain and Buddhist works show the existence of Ardha Magadhi, Magadhi, Suraseni and Maharastri. The Buddhist cannonical language, Pali was originally a dialect of Avanti.[80] It was under these linguistic background Aswagosha, the contemporary of Kanishka, wrote his famous dramatic works. In the works of Asvagosha and Bhasa unpaniniya forms are found,[81] though Patanjali, believed to the contemporary of Pushyamitrasunga, reinforced Paniniyam with his elucidation and supplementaries. Gunadhya's Brihatkatha was written in the Paisacha language and Hala's edited work, Gata Sapta Sati, a collection of the lyric poems of numerous poets including poetesses was a product of Maharastriyan Prakrit. Kautilya's Arthasastra, the antiquity of which is doubted as it's date is ambiguous is a work on state craft. As such there-was no secular literature for Sanskrit

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79 Ibid, p. 283.

80 Ibid, p. 279.

81 T.C. 1955, Vol. 4, p. 294.

before Kalidasa.[82] Secular literature in Sanskrit began with Kalidasa.[83] Deva-Naga-Ari also appeared in inscriptions only during the Gupta period. These facts have been oversighted by the literary historians of Tamil while interpreting Vadacol, northern word and Vadamoli, northern language occuring in Tamil literature and grammar.

Ancient Tamil and Maharastrian literature were closely related in metrical system, techniques of rhyme, suggestion themes and conventions[84] as the early Dravidian was a single speech around 1500 B.C.[85] Kalidasa who synthesised the elements of two great traditions, Dravidian and Aryan, heavily depended Maharastriyan Prakrit literature[86] of which Hala's edited work Gatkasaptasati was a part and made greatest contribution to classical Sanskrit. Some of the themes found in early Tamil literature are found in Sanskiit epics-Mahabharatha and Ramayana. These themes along with other Dravidian elements entered North Indian literature from the original Deccan culture[87] according to G. L. Han. It should also be remembered that the full development of the Puranas, the Smriti literature and the final touches of Epics had taken place only during the Gupta Age according to G.V. Devastali.[88]

A close study of the Vedic literature would suggest that the Hindu religious name like Siva, Parvati, Vishnu, Lakshmi, Kanna (Kanha of Prakrit; Balarama, Skanda etc. have a Non-Vedic origin and later entry into Vedic and later Vedic literature.[89] The Agamic stream now found in Hindu religion of the historic period[90] and social practices

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82 Devastali G.V., "Literature Sanskrit", in the Classical Age (ed) R.C. Majumdar Bombay, 1970, p. 302

83 Hart G.L., op. cit., p. 45.

84 Chatteriji S.K., Dravidian origins and the west Calcutta, 1970, p. 148.

85 Hart G.L., op.cit., p. 45.

86 Ibid, p. 45.

87 Op. cit., p. 291.

88 Chellam V.T., A New light on the Early History of TamilNadu, Tiruchi, 1981, pp. 45- 54.

89 Chatterji S.K., "Race Movements, etc. Calcutta, 1956, p. 162 - 268

90 Hart G.L., op. cit, p. 44 Austerity and Tonsure of Widows entered for the first time in Sanskrit literature in Skandapurana in early medieval times; Puram 248 – 251; 280.

like ritual purity had later entry in upper Indian literature.[91] An analysis of the so called Sanskrit loan words in Tamil in the light of the work done by Sanskrit Professors of the West like Burrow, Emeneau, and Sir Ralph Turner would suggest that the borrowings were more from the opposite source than Prof.S. Vaiyapuripillai and other scholars conceived of. The Tamil literary historians failed to assess Prakrit literature distinguish the Prakrit words and the later evolution of Sanskrit secular literature.

"The Sangam poems are in Akaval metre, the first in the long course of development of Tamil metrical system. It is indigneous and has no parallel in Sanskrit..."[92] in the opinion of S. Vaiyapuripillai. Early Tamil literature shows originality and was complete in itself as a means of cultural expression.[93] Before Sanskrit expansion became wider and deeper through official documents) diplomacy and general communication from the 4th century A.D. Tamil literature was already fully developed and was ready to meet and survive the later massive invasion of Sanskrit."[94]

Historians and literary historians have failed to locate the exact period of commencement of Vedic settlements in the south. The Vedic colonisation was active during the second century B.C. i.e., the Sunga-Kanva age in upper India[95]. In all probability it commenced during the closing period of third century B.C, when the Imperial Mauryan state control lost its grip. The early Brahmin settlements of South in the Second century B.C. according to recent researches,[96] came along the west coast carrying the Parasurama legend. In the coromandel plain Rajasuyam Vetta Perunarkilli

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[91] Vaiyapuripillai S., op. cit. p. 357.

[92] Chellam V.T., op. cit., p. 287.

[93] Ibid, p. 298.

[94] Subramanian N., op. cit., p. 28

[95] Kesavan Veluthat, **Brahman Settlements in Kerala,** Calicut, 1978, pp. 12 – 14, Cellur "Early Aryan Settlement" Journal of Kerala Studies, March 1957; Vol. II. p. II; Chellam V.T., **op. cit.,** p. 57 Panikar K.M., **History of Kerala,** Annamalainagar 1959, p. 2 Akam. 216, 220, 290.

[96] Subramanian N., op. cit., p. 28.

is known to have inaugurated Vedic sacrifices. According to the present study, he belonged to the second century A.D. A close study of the evolution of Agamic and Nigamic elements of Hindu culture will reveal that the Vedic influence on early Tamil literature was at its initial stages.

The last and the serious error which jeopordised the correct calculation of the age of the Sangam is the erroneous equation of Velkelu Kuttuvan, the hero of fifth decade of the Pathittuppattu with Senguttuvan of Silappadikaram.

The name Senguttuvan no where appears in the text of the Eight Anthologies or Ten Idylls songs. Paranar in the 5th decade of Pathittuppattu and Puram 369 names Velkelukuttuvan and not Senguttuvan. Velkelukuttuvan was the contemporary of Paranar, and Manakkilli the Chola prince whereas Senguttuvan was the contemporary of Gajabahu, Satakarni and poet Sathanar the author of Manimegalai. There is difference in the parentage as well and therefore both were widely separated in time. The equation of Velkelu Kuttuvan with Senguttuvan and his induction in the Gajabahu Senguttuvan Synchronism had helped to jumble two personalities into one and bring to a single platform many personages who were separated in space and time. Dr. N. Subramanian who failed to locate this mistake finds his own justification[97] by inventing a time lag in the absence of North Indian exploits in the songs of Paranar. Another factor which misled literary historians is the error in the identity between Karikal Valavan, the hero of Porunarattuppadai and Thirumavalavan, the hero of Pattinappalai. Karikalvalavan (Karikala I) was the contemporary, of Paranar, Kudakko Neduncheraladan. Kalathalayar, Vennikkuyathiyar, Mudathamakkanniyar and a junior contemporary of Mamulanar. He belonged to the third century B. C. He came to the throne while he was very young by the right of direct

[97] Porunararruppadai, 132.

inheritance.[98] Thirumavalavan (Karikala II) was the contemporary of Kadiyalur Uruthirankannanar, Thamppal Kannanar, Kovur Kilar, Konattu Erichaloor Madalan Kumaranar, Kuttuvankothai, Kurappalli Tunjiya Killivalavan and his brother Nalankilli. He came to the throne by accident of fortune.[99] Tirayar or Tondaiyar occupation of Kanchi became prominent during his time.[100] He belonged to the first century A.D.

The identity error in the Gajabahu Senguttuvan Synchronism which otherwise is a valid ground to fix the lower limit of the age of the Sangam had thrown overboard the possible political frame work. The possibility of fixing the chronology of the Sangam age through cross references was thrown out of gear and all those who attempted calculation on the basis of this sheet anchor were misled, confused and landed at a wrong stage.

The greatest handicap for fixing the chronology of the Sangam works is its lack of stratification of the songs of individual poets in the chronological order. The present grouping as of collections, 10 songs and 18 didactics, now available was made in the 15th century by Mailainathar. The attempts of classification made by K. N. Sivaraja Pillai and S. Vaiyapuri Pillai are of general nature. The first serious attempt towards stratification in recent times is attempted by P.K. Velayudham of Tiruchi. He succeeded in bringing the poets of the anthologies in a chronological order by dividing the period from Mauryan ascendency to 125 A.D. into six units keeping famous poets who enjoyed longevity in pairs as milestones in the chronological chart. The period of Mamulanar and Paranar tops the chart.[101] His work too is incomplete. The next effort of note in this direction has been made by S. Retnasamy of Annamalai University. He brought together

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98 Pattinappalai, 227.

99 Perumpanarruppadai, 454.

100 Vel Attavanai, Attached to College Magazine, Melur, 1974, pp. 56 – 68.

101 Retnasamy S. **A Short History of the Ancient Tamils and their Literature,** Annamalainagar, 1979. pp. 78 – 92.

the cluster of poets clinging to the individual princes and chieftains.[102] The works of these two scholars help to pegmark the scheme of stratification of the Sangam works.

Fresh Attempt

Eliminating the identity error in the Gajabahu Senguttuvan Synchronism one can ascend along a chronological chart through cross references to poets and princes. But the steps for ascendancy are not in continuity. On the other hand in Pathittuppattu we come across a working chronological scheme as provided by the author of the colaphone. The Mauryan problem in Sangam literature provides the signal and the key for the time landing. Linking both, a working chronology is possible. The Nandas, Mauryas and Padaliputra have reference at least in six songs.[103] Four poets,Mamoolanar, Paramkottanar, Athirayanar and Mocikiranar made direct unequivocal references. S. Vaiyapuripillai,[104] Kanakasabhai,[105] K. N. Siva-raja Pillai and others[106] and in a recent paper D. Sadasivam of Madras University doubted the comtemporanity of Mamoolanar to Mauryan intervention in South Indian politics due to the ring fence chronology created by V. Kanakasabhai without eliminating the identity error in Velkelu Kuttuvan of Pathittupattu and Karikalan, hero of Porunarattuppadai.

M.G.S. Narayanan of Calicut University in his book Re-interpretations of South Indian History[107] broke the ring fence created by Kanakasabhai and Sivaraja Pillai, and asserted that "there is no valid reason to compel us to imagine that Mamoolanar was not a contemporary or near contemporary of the Nandas and Mauryas who are known

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102 Akam, 251, 265, 281, 69 Puram 175 and Kurunthokai 75.

103 Ilakkiyadeepam, Pari Nilayam Madras pp. 131 to 144.

104 op. cit., p. 198.

105 op. cit., p. 48.

106 "Historical Gleanings from Sangam Poet Mamoolanar" T.K. Venkataraman's Birth Day Commemoration Volume, pp. 229 – 225.

107 Mauryan Problem in Sangam Works, Journal of Indian History (Aug. 1975), Vol. LIII part II. pp. 243 - 254

from archaeological evidence to have made their presence felt in places like Maski and Siddbapore in Mysore.[108] The Jambai Inscription discovered in Tamil Nadu, recently by the State Department of Archaeology brings Athiyaman Neduman Anji, the hero of Avvaiyar to the close proximity to Rock Edict No. II of Asoka. It further reinforces the Theory of Mauryan intervention and the calculation of the age of Sangam with the aid of Mauryan problem in Sangam Literature.

The North South contact in Mauryan times is further substantiated by the presence of punch marked silver coins at Erode, Pollachi, Kallidaikkurichi and other places in large quantities.[109] The nature of Akam poems mentioning Nandas and Mauryas are contemporary with the poet in the estimation of Dr. H. S. David.[110] The songs of Mamoolanar contain reference to specific events personalities and regions. They demonstrate the poets intimate knowledge of political situations in India. The context in which Mamoolanar Paramkottanar and Atirayanar make the references to Mauryan invasion is an authentic evidence that

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108 Clarence Meloney, op. cit., p. 17

109 "The Earliest Tamil Poems Extant" T.C. 1955, Vol. 4, p. 93

110 Akam, 65, 233

the incidence was in the green memory of their readers. Mamoolanar's phrase Velpor Nandar has also political significance.

The question now posed is about the period of Mauryan intervention in Tamil Politics. Applying time factor theory V.A. Smith ruled out ChandraGupta. Asoka's conquests confined to Kalinga only, though he enjoyed the possession of territory bordering Tamilagam. Historians left the choice to Bindusara and Saranath added fuel with the story of the destruction of 16 States. Asoka's peaceful possession of Deccan was a symptom of habitual obedience of a long standing. Chandragupta Maurya's selection of Sravana Belgola for a religious life after retirement along with Bhadrabahu suggest an earlier Mauryan expansion under the first conquering prince and Bindusara's action might have been against the disobedient princes. Hence the Mauryan consolidation of the south as seen from the Sangam sources had taken place during the period of the first conquering prince ChandraGupta Maurya.

Mamoolanars references like Velpor Nandar and Vampa Moriyar, suggest that the poet was a contemporary to Nanda-Mauryan transition. He was also the junior contemporary of Udiyan Cheral[111] by indirect evidence the hero of the first decade of Pathittuppattu. Treating Udiyan Cheral as the contemporary of Nanda-Maurya transition and allowing a remaining period of fifteen years. Since 321 B.C, Udiyan Cheral's, rule is taken up to 306 B.C. The chronological scheme provided by the compiler of Pathittuppattu is followed with marginal adjustments and we reckon the approximate chronology of the Chera Princes as follows:

1. Udiyan Cheral, 15 Years from 321 B.C. to 306 B.C., Hero of I decade.
2. Nedum Cheraladan, 15 Years from 306 to 291 B.C., Hero of II decade.

[111] Puram, 183.

3. Palyanai Selkelu Kuttuvan, 15 Years from 291 to 276 B.C., Hero of III decade.

4. Kalangai Kanni Narmudi Cheral, 15 Years from 276 to 261 B.C, Hero of IV decade.

5. Kadal Pirakku Ottiya Kuttuvan, 30 Years from 261 to 231 B.C, Hero of V decade.

6. Adukotpattu Cheraladan, 38 Years from 231 to 93 B.C., Hero of VI decade.

7. Mantaram Cheral Irumporai, Contemporary of Vadama Vannakkan Perunchathanar Antuvan Cheral, and other unnamed, 72 Years from 194 to 120 B.C. Intervening.

8. Selvakkadunko VaIiyadan, 25 Years from 120 to 95 B.C., Hero of VII Decade.

9. Perum Cheral Irumporai, 17 Years from 95 to 78 B.C., Hero of VII Decade.

10. Ham Cheral Irumporai, l6 Years from 78 to 62 B.C., Hero of IX Decade.

11. Yanaikatchei Mantaram Cheral, 37 Years from 62 to 25 B.C., Hero of IX Decade, Contemporary of Koodaloorkkilar.

The period of collection and edition of Ainkurunuru and Patirrupattu Kuttuvankothai ,Kokkotai Marpan, Kanaikkai Irumporai and other unnamed kings are placed from 25 B.C. to 75 A.D., and Cheraladan from 75 A.D. to HO A.D.

The lower limit of the Sangam age we fix with the aid of Gajabahu Senguttuvan Synchronism. Senguttuvan, the son of Cheraladan and the hero of Silappadikaram was occupying the Chera throne during the second century A.D. according to Gajabahu Senguttuvan Synchronism. Though famous, as per the versons of Silappadikaram none of the poets of the anthologies and sung about him. Further Silappadikaram represent a philosphical age which is different from the naturalistic anthropocentric age of the Sangam bards. These factors establish that the age of the Sangam was already over during his time. Ariyappadaikadantha Nedunchezhyan was the contemporary of

Cheraladan. Ariyappadai-kadaniha Nedunchezhyan's song finds a place in Puranam[112]. Hence we take these two monarchs among the last representatives of the Sangam age. Since Cheraladans rule is placed from 85 A.D. to 110 A.D. to the beginning of the second century A.D. is taken to mark the end of the age of the Sangam.

The upper age limit of the age of Sangam has to be settled. The import of the song of Mamoolanar, referring Velpor Nandar place the song of Mamoolanar to fourth century B.C. The style and metrical perfection of the anthologies suggest an evolution over a long period.[113] Some of the verbal constructions of the poem in Puram[114] like Valangundu Pookundu became obsolate during latter times. Hence the period of composition of the earlier songs found in the anthologies have to be taken at least a century before Mamoolanar and hence we fix fifth century B.C. as the upper age limit of the anthologies, though some of the songs of the anthologies belong to an earlier period.

The problem of the age of the Sangam is not over as Tolkappiyam stands detached from the anthologies. Basing Kalaviyal commentary K. Vellaivarananar[115] placed it as 5320 B.C. Though he justifies such an early dating, he has not established his date with enough proof. Tamil literary historians and critics like K.N. Sivaraja Piliai and S.Vaiyapuri Pillai and almost all scholars at National and International levels[116] awarded 5th century A.D. dating to Tolkappiyam allowing a posterior interval of Three Centuries in between the period of composition of the anthologies and Tolkappiyam on account of the lapses in verbal usage and poetics in the anthologies. S. Vaiyapuri piliai, also banked his faith on the impact of Sanskrit grammari-

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112 S. Vaiyapuripillai, T.C. op. cit., p. 242

113 Puram 440, 399, 398, 396, 395, 393, 391, 390, 387, 384, 338, etc

114 Tolkappiyam, (Annmalainagar, 1978) p. 126.

115 Chatterji S.K., op. cit. p. 13., A.L. Basham op. cit p. 462, G.L. Hart op. cit (Essays) p. 41; K.N. Sivaraja pillai; op. cit. p. 44; S. Vaiyapuripillai, Tamil Sudar manikal, (Madras 1949), p.p. 42 - 54

116 Vaiyapuripillai S., Op.cit., p. 54.

ans, Bharatha and Manu-for dating Tolkappiyam at fifth century A.D.[117] His views have been accepted by Catholic reverance by most of the scholars at National and International levels without going into the root of his arguments.

1. Tolkappiyam was intended for a secular literature and at the time of panini and pathanjali there was no secular literature in Sanskit language.

2. Tolkappiyam like parthisakiyas is natural and simple in its treatment unlike Panini.

These factors will show that Tolkappiyam had an independent start and is independent of Panini or Pathanjali.

3. Tolkappiyam's Meipattiyal represent natural expressions which has representation in literature in love themes, the pleasures, joys, pangs and sorrow of the characters.

The names of musical instruments used in Koothanool a very ancient work, bear tamil roots in them,[118] whereas Bharatha's musical instruments. Kuranja, Muraja, Kulal etc. show Dravidian origin according to Sambamoorthy.[119]

4. In the ancient Tamil Music, there was more application of astronomy[120] Tolkappiyam's octave is having twelve divisions where as Bharatha's has twenty four. Panchamarapu in Sutra 16 relates the various types of voice to the twelve Rasies.

These factors in conjunction with Bharatha's Confession in his Natyasastra[121] about his inspiration from southern varieties explain the existence of Dravidian varieties

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[117] Ibid, p. 42 – 44.

[118] Koothanool, Sutra, 146, (124) South India Music, p. 146.

[119] Panchamarap, Sutras 14, 15, 16.

[120] Natya Sastra, Chap. 4. Sloka, 31.

[121] Akaro, Vyrai, Jananam.

of music before Bharatha and Tolkappiyar's dependence on Bharatha is therefore nullified.

5. The menstral purity clause of Manu is a common sense question for all Societies and Manu's inspiration on Tolkappiyam is only an assumption of S. Vaiyapuripillai. The Vedic and Sanskritic influence in Tolkappiyam is the innovation of later commentators and speculation of S. Vaiyapuripillai as they had taken the face value of many of the clauses of Tolkappiyam in the light of the Socio-religious background of their times.

The lapses in poetics of Tolkappiyam during the time of anthologies with special reference to Paripadal, the disuse of the terms like Mijiru and change in the connotations of terms like seval moothu, Kadam during the age of anthologies place Tolkappiyam anterior to the anthologies and not posterior as believed by some scholars. In view of the accepted interval of three centuries in between the period of composition of Tolkappiyam and the anthologies and the proximity of Tolkappiyam to Praihisakyas we assign Tolkappiyam a date, not later than seventh century B. C.

Tolkappiyam represents a different age in the history of Tamil literature. Some of the literary works of this age exist in name and in fragments as quoted by later commentators. The recently recovered book Koothanool, in view of its varbal construction and specific listing of the important works referred to by later commentators as works of the age of Tolkappiyam, in sutra two, is regarded as the other representative of the age of Tolkappiyam. The lower limit of the age of Tolkappiyam we fix as 504 B. C. the date of dislocation of landmass by natural havoc, referred to in the Ceylonese chronicles. The date of the upper age limit of the age of Tolkappiyam is inconclusive at present in view of the initial stage of marine archaeology in TamilNadu.

In the light of the arguments given so far, we conclude that the three academic periods mentioned in the commentary to Iraiyanar Kalaviyal is a figurative representation of the three stages in the literary history of Tamil language. As in the

case of other ancient languages, the history of the first stage is lingering in darkness, the second stage in which Tolkappiyam was produced, not later than 7th century B.C., terminated at 504 B. C. and the age of anthologies spavined from fifth century B.C. to second century A.D, though some of the songs in the collections belong to an anterior age.

CHAPTER - II

THE PATTERN OF POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Patterns of Government are the result of human endeavour. An organised Government is one of the essential attributes of a civilized community. Governmental structures arise bearing on the environment in which they germinate and grow. That accounts for the prevalence of a wide variety of political structures. The growth is conditioned by factors like social structure, economic aspirations, personality formation, political behaviour and the like. The attributes of the various forms of polity was a central concern of political theory from the Greeks to the present day studies of Non-western Governments and political processes engage the attention of scholars. The impulse towards sampling more completely the Universe of man's experience with Politics has led to the study of the political systems of the past, based on available historical studies or on original historical research.

This is one such modest attempt to analyse the process of political development during the Sangam Age, perhaps the earliest known experiment of the Tamils. The focus of the study is on performance, interaction and behaviour. Such a study enables us to locate the dynamic forces that helped the formation of the polity wherever they exist the Social class culture, economic and social change, in political elites or in environment. It does not mean disregard of formal institutions, but rather a concern with them in so far as they reflect or influence political action.

Historical experience of early times of political systems as well as the environmental changes to which they are exposed affect their propensities for change and set limits on which they can change. In Tamilakam of the Sangam age, political functions were handled intermittently and diffusely by social structures such as kinship or status groups. The pattern of development is associated with capability and response to various environmental pressures and internal aspirations. The pattern tends to be an Omni functional social system. There art; no clear boundaries between the economic, the political and the religious systems of action. Changes in the division of labour and ID orientation appropriate for these different forms of social action are intermittent. The boundaries between them are not drawn with any clarity, nor is there any clear awareness among the people of the shift from one form of action to the other.

Political Pattern

Tamil polity was made of dominant crowned monarchs and subordinate chieftains. The dominance and subordination were of varying duration and magnitude. The subordination of the chieftains mainly consisted in the smalluess of the territory they ruled over and the consequent inferiority in their military and economic resources. This subordination was the result of historical tradition, was tacit and granted when necessary and withheld when possible, so that attempts by Chieftains to free themselves from monarchical suzerainty and counter attempts by kings to enforce their hegemony over the recalcitrant chief were a continuous political process marked by large-scale as well as petty warfare. This condition is faithfully reflected in the literature as well as epigraphy of the Tamil country.

The Kings Muventhar

Of the Muventhar (Three Crowned Monarchs) who ruled over Tamilakam, the Cholas, excelled because of their control over the fully irrigated fertile Kaveri basin and delta (Marutham). The Pandyas ruled over the predominantly pastoral (Mullai) and the

littoral tracts (Neithal) and the Cheras over the hilly country in the west (Kurinchi). The extent of the territory over which each of the three Crowned Kings held sway was never constant. With every change that political affairs took, their fortunes too changed. Though antiquity for these monarchs is claimed from the dawn of time, Monarchy seems to be the result of a long process of evolution.[122] In the Institution of Monarchy, we discover that the system had acquired uniformity and certain amount of unwritten sanctity.

The Chieftains

The Classics describe the Crowned monarchs as Venthar, Mudiyudaiya-Venthar, Muracn-mulanku tanai Muventar.[123] The expression Venthar and Velir is repeatedly used in the Classics.[124] The commentators believe that "Murasu and (Mudi" Drum and Crown) are the conventional royal paraphernalia and affirm that the Chieftains did not possess them.[125] The Classics make explicit references to the Chieftains not along with the Muventhar, but apart from them. In all other respects, the Chieftains have been more or less autocratic, who led the army on occasion of war and ruled the land during peace. Some of them were equal in prowers.

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122 A contrary view was expressed by the author of the Tinnevelly Gazelteer (Pate) who quotes an old legend. A similar view was expressed by Dr. Caldwell in his History of Tinnevelly about the origins of the Chola, Pandya and Chera monarchs. According to these traditions, there had been originally but one monarch ruling over the entire Tamil Nadu from a place on the eastern coast of the Tinneveliy District and that he divided his land among his three sons-Chola, Chera and Pandya. Caldwell placed his theory on a story in Tamraparani Mahathmya, a Sanskrit work of uncertain date but certainly not earlier than the 17th Century A. D. It is very likely that the author of the Manatmya had taken his clue from the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana where it is stated that a Nairritya (South western regional ruler) chief by name Sukesa had divided his territories into three over each of which he appointed one of his three sons Malyavan, Sumali and Mali.

123 Purananuru : 35 (3-4)

124 Pathittuppattu 10 (30-31) ; 49 (7-8);75 (94-95;; 88 (13-14) Ventarum Velirum.

125 Tolkappiyam : Poruladikaran 626, 638.

The political structure was not permanent in character but transitory in nature proved by the subsequent history of Tamilagam. This marks, but a stage in political development. In the early centuries of the Christian era, Tamilagam consisted of a number of autonomous kinship or lineage units. There were many tribes and leaders of those tribes held sway over demarcated territories of their own.[126] The tribe itself had no explicit political organisation or structure.[127] But each one of the component lineage segments was a self governing unit. When conflicts arise between the different segments, some informal political arrangement became possible.

This segmentary lineage arrangement or set up was more complex than merely patriarchal in form. The local units tended have the same powers as the paramount chief. Some of the Chieftains claimed equality of status with the Muventar. Mainly, it was possible for the Chieftains either because of their prowess or matrimonial alliances. The nature of the bondage between the chieftains and the Muventhar though not explicitly categorised in the literary sources, the chieftains of the Sangam epoch can be grouped for historical purposes under three heads; the Independent?, the M nor, and the Refractory. The first were masters of politically demarcated areas over which they exercised sovereign sway. The second, though possessing definite areas of their own were often subordinates, if not always, paying tribute to one or other of Muventhar or to a major independent chief. The third were those commanders of armed retinues, who having no definite ancestral areas of their own often shifted their allegiance from one to the other of the above said Kings or Chiefs either or wage or other sentimental considerations.

The first category can again be classified into Velir and Non-Velir, the former having mutual mental relationship with the Muventhar; giving and taking brides

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126 Tirayans of Kanchi, Malayamans of Koval, Atikamans of Takaditr, Marans of Mokur, Ayes of Nancil and the rest.

127 There had been a number of corporate tribes such as Kununbar, Otiyar, Vedar, Intlar, Eyinar and others. More dominating are the Kosar, Konkar etc. Purananuru 97, 298. Patiinappalar I, 231.

mutually and the latter possessing perhaps the right of giving only but not of taking brides. This apparently small distinction had yet deeper social and political impact especially on the laws (conventional) of succession and participation in religious rituals. While it was permitted for a high placed man to take a bride from a group placed lower in status than his, the off-spring of this union would belong to the Family (Kudi) of the bride only. But the marriage of a high-placed brides with a male belonging to a lower station than hers would fail to receive social sanction. Therefore, when 'Mutual Give and Take of brides' took place between a King and Velir, absolute equality of status was implied, There was the theoretical possibility of a section of Velir succeeding some day or other to the throne of the King.[128] If on the other hand there was no chance for a Chieftain to become a bridegroom of a monarch's house, the status inferiority was patent. Among the chieftains themselves this distinction struck roots as any violation of it might involve a loss of status in the royal courts. These persisting and aristocratic and lineage elites formed an important structural component of the Sangam polity. They tended to resist centralisation, regulation and extraction. These characteristics point out the fact of the nascent political process of the prospect of a bureaucratic empire. With efflux of time, along with structural and cultural changes there was an increase in the extractive, regulative and symbolic capabilities of the political systems of the post Kadunkon period. The establishment of Kingdoms suggest that they developed out of situations in which a particular lineage group established control over other clans or out of situations in which a wandering militarily powerful band conquered less powerful groups and subjected them to control as long as it was possible. We do not hear of such elite during the Pallava or the First Pandya period. This indicates that the period from the sixth to the ninth century witnessed a centuralisation of monarchical power and the reduction

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[128] Tolkappiyam-Akattinai (30) - Nacchinarkkiniyar Commentary, p. 97. The expression Makat-Kodal literally means 'marrying the daughter' Uruvappahrer Ilamcet chennai married the daughter of Alundur Vel. His son Karikal Peruvalattan married the daughter of Nankur Vel. His daughter Conai (Manakkilli) is the mother of Senhuttuvan Chera.

of the traditional chieftains to the position of royal officers. In the later half of the ninth and early half of the tenth centuries, we hear of a few important feudatories like the Banas the Sambavarayas, the Muttaraiyar and number of other chieftains. Their rise must be attributed to the weakness of the centre and laxity at the periphery of the Kingdoms encouraging rebellion and eventually independence. The difference between the Sangam and post Sangarn times is that, in the earlier period the Chieftains were traditionally organised political factor with recognised rights and duties and not a product of monarchical weakness. In later times, the chieftains started as royal officers or governors of provinces, who exploiting the weakness of the centre grew at its cost.

Political Ideals

The original Tamilian concept of Kingship seems to have been but an expanded form of independent chieftaincy, tribal in character. The comparative isolation and freedom from foreign interference were the major causes of this political complacency which did not at all dream of any sort of world rulership. It was perhaps the Ramayana that first generated the very idea of a possible over lord (Indra or Ravaneswara) who could become the Rajadhiraja or Maventhar (Great King) of the whole of Bharatha-varsha whose motive for conquest was not the exploitation of the neighbour's resources but to get the verbal honour of being called Maventhar. This related ambition led to early Tamilian Kings under taking Yattiras of conquest even up to the Himalayas. This idea of conquest influenced even the smallest of chieftains. That was also one of the major causes of many internal wars. In this resepect, the political set up of the early Tamils may be described as traditional (primitive) exposed to environmental challenges. This not-only affected their propensities for change but also set limits on the ways in which they can change.

The interaction of one Political ideal with another in its environment normally results in the development of a specialized bureaucracy and a professional army. In the

case of the Tamil Sangam polity, we find neither. In Tamilagam, the rulers responded to climates initiated within their own societies. The Tamilian warmly advocated rnanial glory. He stands up for a fight to a finish. The number of people employed in military services was small, compared to those of later times. Their equipment and training were not of a specialised character.[129] Perhaps well-built men mostly of the hilly and desert regions were enrolled in the army. The Sangam Classics mention that the Malavar, Mallar, and Maravar formed the martial classes recruited for service.[130] There were also others employed for discharging lighter responsibilities connected with war. The lyavar served as drum-beaters.[131] Reference is also found to the Vayavar who sometimes served as drum-bearers, but others as soldiers of battle.

Some of the chieftaincies were filled by the Commander of the royal armies. Titles like Enati prove this fact[132] The Kings created new type of chiefs and bestowed on them a part of their fresh conquests for occasional military services. The Chieftains were loyal and rendered military service. In lieu of a regular salary, they held estates and became petty rulers under their sovereigns Kudavar, Kuttuvar, Atiyar, Vtiyar, Malayar, Puliyar, Villor, Kuravar, Malavar and Konkar seem to have been in affiliation with the Cheras- Others like Parathavar, Kosar and the like were in affiliation with Cholas and Pandyas. But these affiliations do not appear to have been constant, the tribal chiefs changing sides whenever it suited their purposes Recruitment from a particular tribe or ethnic group is illustrative of particularistic criteria of recruitment. Selection from royal and aristocratic chieftaincies illustrates recruitment by ascription or status. The historical sociology of recruitment gives a fascinating example of the rulers having

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129 Mention is made of the four-fold army chariots and cavalry were weak and the elephants had only very limited role. The infantry was the main stay of the army.

130 Atikaiman Neduman and, one of the last seven philanthropists Kadaiyelu Vallals was a chief of the Malavar. (Maliar) Patimippanu : 43 : 25 (Maravar) Narrinai : 18 ; 5-6

131 Pathittuppaltu : 17 : 7 Nattrinai: 113 ; 10-1

132 Choliya Enathi Thirukkuttuvan : Puram 394

sought to select staff upon whom they could rely. These military officials were required to hold loyalty to their ruler above loyalty to their family, clan, or status groups. Such a recruitment brough into, political roles, people with different propensities, interestest values and attitudes. It had a positive impact on the performance of the Sangam monarchs whose claim to glory lasted only for a short period and they had to change whenever the political Kaleidoscope received a tilt.

The King

The kings of the land were largely a group of war-like rugged romantic tribal chieftains who held sway over terrains running from the hills to the sea and patronised learned men who sang ballads and panegyrics about them. The Arasar was at the top of the ladder of social hierarchy. Several foctors contributed to the pre-eminent position. 1) Venerablem men blessed the King in stereotyped benedictions such as "may you be blessed with as many years of royal life as the grains of sand on the shores of the sea"[133] Sometimes professional flatterers and courtiers praised the ruler. This tradition known as Mudal Vaiyi was concerned With describing the ancestry of the King.[134] 2) Powers in war, immutable justice, protection of the poor, liberality and piety were all spoken of as a leader's attributes. His foremost duty was the protection of his followers and herein lay the clue for the solidarity of the monarchical institution during the period of transition. 3) A basic assumption that strengthened monarchy was the equation of kings with Gods, especially Vishnu.[135] This situation is designated Pooval Nilai in Tamil literary convention. Not only was the King invested with divinity,

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133 Purananuru : 343, 9, 43, 55, 361, 371, 198

134 The Benedictions were replicas of the older Vedic slogans of the Taittareya Aranyaka ; "Swasti-prajabhyah paripalayamam Nayena Margena Mahim Mahisah ; Go Brahmaneybhyah subaraastu Nityam. Loka-samasta sukine bhavantu" (Let there be Universal peace ; Let the Brahmins and cows prosper - Let all live happily for ever)

135 Purananuru : 8, 56, 59, 374.

but his status and power depended on an implied contract between the people and the Gods. The Muventar particularly claimed descent from one or the other of the famous Solar or Lunar dynasties immortalised in the Epics and the Puranas. There are litarary traditions of some scion or there of the above 'dynasties marrying princess' of Tamilagam. Even a divine King was not infallible 4) The kings wore garlands (both totemic and military) while at court and in the field of battle. They wore anklets which signified valour. They sat on thrones which represented royal dignity.[136] 5) The royal umbrella represented the King's sovereignty. If the army lost it in the field of battle, it was its greatest humiliation. The whisk too was a necessary paraphernalia in the royal court. We learn how the Chera inscribed their bow-emblem on the Himalayas. The tiger emblem of the Cholas is likewise referred 10[137] 6). Though not analogous to those of their counterparts in the North, who were Kshathriyas (Dvijas) they did perform sacrifices like Rajasuya. These sacrifices were symbolic of the prowess of the performer and performed to confer more fame and prosperity.

Powers and Duties

The King as well as the Chieftain had no clearly defined limits to his power of Government. Kingship was not an office nor a magistracy with a certain sphere of duty and limit of action. It was rather a social position with various grades depending on varying wealth and expecting rather than demanding reverence, obedience and tribute from all men of lower station. The Muventhar combined in themselves not only the practices, beliefs, and other social forces of the ancient Tamils, but also the new ones of the North Indian monarchs. It is true that a few internal conservative elements resisted such eclectic tendencies. But by and large the unobjectionable and finer aspects

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[136] Purananuru : 6, 17, 367, 50, 31.

[137] Ibid .- 33, 39, 59, 174. These are all a direct reflection of the indigenous and tribal features. The Ar or Atti flower pertained to the Cholas and their tiger emblem is most probably traceable to the wild feline species that would have infested the swampy marshes of the major and southern parts of Kaveri-delta in pre-Christian centuries.

penetrated the political stratum. A fusion resulted though this fusion was restricted to the urbanised, intellectual and sophisticated in the society.

The royal duties' and patterns of life though not historically recorded could be called from incidental statements in the poems. There was the political concept that the "King was the pilot of the ship of the state."[138] The piloting was a hazardous and often thankless job. The perpetual concern about the welfare of the subjects which the King showed was 'Nattam' This was different from Sulchi (Araicci) that is diplomacy. 'Royal Justice' was another important concept in Nat tarn since the opposite of it (injustice; was tyranny).

An analysis of the office of the King shows that it was rather a social position. It was a hallowed institution. The Venthar signified more than a hereditary chieftain and his power at home rested simply on sacred sentiments. That there was minimal role differentiation is amply proved by the duties discharged by the King. The leader came to occupy the highest place (authority) and his followers faithfully supported him. The founding myths characteristic of the leader in segmentary systems suggest that they developed out of necessity when a particular lineage group tried to establish control over other clans in the same area or a wandering, militarily powerful band conquered less powerful groups.[139]

The social position of the King is brought out by the implied contract between the people and the Gods. Two factors were emphasized as essential, one was

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138 Purananuru : 2, 13, 22, 35, 70, 71, 75, 157, 185 .

139 Vide Supra Poovai Nitai and Kudal Vaiyai. Stanzas 201 and 202 of Purananuru are addressed by the poet Kapilar to the Chieftain Irunkovel. The Chieftains' ancestors were the rulers of well-fortified Tuvarai for forty nine generations. He was known by the title Pulikadiinal. In poem 202, the poet curses the chieftain for declining to marry his wards and vows that he would settle them in Evvi's ancient family of Velir.

Punishment (Danda in Sanskrit) and the other Duty (Dharma). The unrighteous could never prosper. Thus in the sphere of pure politics, Monarchy supplied war - leadership and social captaincy. Cultural secularisation was implicit in social captaincy. Social Captaincy certainly called for a direct relationship between the ruler and the ruled. The King had to consider the entire Kingdom as one large family and share intimately and personally all their joys and sorrows and be ever a source or inspiration to them. If matters of difference and discord arose, the necessity for unity and amity was emphasized in order to establish concord. Thus welded, the people shared the national joys and sorrows, looked upon all men as equal and lived a cohesive, and mutually responsive life.

The capacity of the King to mobilize and extract resources and to regulate behaviour, though substantially higher than that of the tribal system, was not high as that of the large scale empires. One of the reasons for this was the absence of an established military system and organised bureaucracy. The ability of the King to enforce his demands was relatively limited. This was at least in part due to the mixture of household and bureaucratic forms of organisation. It was also attributable to the fact that this was a pre-literate society, which meant that effective records could not be kept. The absence of a money economy made it difficult to accumulate resources.[140] Much of the tax revenue was in the form of agricultural produce which had to be distributed and consumed quickly.

The commoners were the beneficiaries of what may be called 'con-material distribution. Among the psychological distributions were the show of pomp, rite,

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[140] Some indigenous coins seen to have been used. Akananuru 363 : 8; Kuruntokai 67 : 4). Some Kasus have also been unearthed with words "Tinnan Yetiran Sendan A But definite data regarding their denomination and exchange value are not known. Barter appears to have been in vogue. Reference to the use of coins as media of exchange are very few. Unminted solid gold was gifted to poets, Brahmins and Panar.

symbolism and ceremony. The custom of celebrating the birthday of the leader may be cited as an instance. Madurai Kanchi speaks of the jubilant manner in which the people celebrated Mannan's birthday.[141] These festivals finked the whole society together and established its relation to its sacred and laudable origins. The symbolic capacity seems to have been quite substantial. The population on the whole was loyal and submissive. There was the effort to make the king appear to be a man of extra - ordinary power and sacred virtue. Royal ceremonies performed at the palace since dawn to night were calculated to enhance his personality. The possession of the drum (Murasu) is of great significance in this respect-A striking feature about them is their extravagance, liberalicy, extended not only to poets and bards but also simple creatures like peacock and botanical creeper. Such acts of generosity should normally make the patron the laughing stock. The Sangam poets praise these men and christen the act as Kodai madam (mistranslated as Foolish Largesee).

Probable Origin of the Institution

The Tamil expression Ko is used to refer to kings in general. Kon was a variant of Ko. It meant leader or King. P. T. Sriaivasa Iyengar makes the suggestion that the word Kon is derived from Kol or rod, the badge of the herdsman and that the royal sceptre was the later development of the herds' man's rod which became the symbol of authority.[142] This is indeed a shrewd guess but lacks the vigour of historical reasoning. The Sangam Classics picture for us. in outline at least, the features of the kingship of a new born state.

It is probable that an institution which existed long before the rise of the Muventhar should have been accepted as an heirloom by the earliest statesmen. That

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[141] Madurai Kanchi : 618-619. The Classics describe the festivals like Pongal (Narrinai 22), Villavan Vitavu (Kalittokai 27 : 24), Indra vila (Aiukurunuru 62 : 1), festivals connected with inflow of fresh water and rise of floods (Paripadal 6: 11-15), Ullivilavu (Akananuru 368:l6-18)Panguni Vilavu(Akananuru 137; 139) Puntodai Vila Akananuru 187; 5-10) Kodiyar Vilavu (Akananuru 352 : 4-6)

[142] Srinivasa Iyengar P.T., Op.cit., p.16.

monarchy of the time was the result of evolution can best be studied by comparing three different forms of it, which roughly represent three successive stages in its history. This is discernible in the Sangam poems. It is not a mysterious transference process, but the result of social economic development.

The Sangam era witnessed the transition from tribal to village economy with a parallel development of society, likewise. The process of evolution has kept pace with the changing patterns of economic and social behaviour from tribal to a higher level of society. Evidences reflect a set of attitudes which categorically define the problems, as problems which human beings can solve which no longer be left to fate. Thus process of economic and social change affected directly several components of political structure.

The Purananuru and Pathittupattu give us the idea of a society tending towards the development of organised administration under a form of Government called Ventu. But it is to be admitted that there is not much evidence of the life of the fully formed State during the second stage namely Chieftaincy.[143] The factor that strikes us most is that there are Kings of ail degrees ranging from Senguttuvan credited with a North-Indian expedition to a peace-loving Pari.

Probably here we get a warning against the mistake of supposing that there is anything of the nature of an established and irrecoverable system of Government to be discovered in the Sangam Classics.

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[143] Kuppuswami T.V., Sangam Chieftains and Their Times (Ph. D. Thesis Unpublished) Kerala University, Trivandrum, 1977.

Asoka[144], the Mauryan King refers to the Muventhar as independent States beyond the southern frontier. Before him, Kautilya[145] spoke of Pandya Kavataka and the lucrative trade between the North and Southern States.

Evidently, the Tamilian States must have started functioning certainly before the Mauryan Revolution.[146] In all probability the Tamil States could have been in existence a few centuries before the Revolution. The formation of Chieftaincies should have preceded at least by a couple of centuries- It is also reasonable to suppose that the Tamil States would have become important enough to earn Asoka's mention only after a long period of probation and infancy. After a few centuries of much unsettled condition, they could have stabilized themselves. The feudatories must have enjoyed great popularity during the interval only to be finally overpowered by the Muventhar. Strikingly enough, this is also the period when the tribal states and Republics of North India crystallised into the well-marked Kingdoms in the Indus Valley and the Gangetic Valley.

The Tamil autocracies described in the Anthologies must have certainly been preceded by another type of political organisation which could have been Republican in character. The territorial expansion of the peaceful agricultural communities seem to have placed themselves under leaders of military powers. They later on must have turned autocratic, pure and simple and robbed the communities of their original rights and powers. Praying upon these pioneer leaders the chieftaincies must have come into existence. They incourse of time must have been appropriated by the Muventar, and partly incorporated in the political structure.

Political Elites

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[144] Asoka 273-232 B. C.

[145] Also known as Chanakya and Vishnugupta, author of Arthasastra,, Minister of Chandragupta, Kavataka was a kind of pearl available in the Pandyan Country.

[146] The initial date of Chandra Gupta's reign is uncertain. The Cambridge Indian History dates it to 321 B. C and the end of the reign as 297 B.C.

'Royal Justice', an important implied Tamilian concept of Nattam was referred to earlier as the opposite of it was tyranny. A pre-requisite to the discharge of this sacred duty is Law-making. There is no mention of the processs of Law-making anywhere. It was only customary law that was administered. Custom must have got modified in the normal course without any direct process of legislation. Law-making or rule-making was not viewed as a legitimate function of the political system. It tended to be a derivative of the rule-application and rule-adjudication functions. Through the application of custom to specific cases, general rules emerged and were slowly elaborated and changed as the Kingdom encountered and coped with novel problems.

Certain classes of people enjoyed the freedom to admonish the King in respect of what they should do under given circumstances. This privilege was utilised to the fullest extent and seems to have been given and exercised by learned brahmins, poets of a higher order and officials of certain cadre and some of the elders of the land-generally those who constituted the 'Elite' of the land. Wise men in the royal court (Santror) missed no opportunity to impress on the King his duties.

The poets and panegyrics had extra-ordinary influence over their patrons. They were held in high esteem by the rulers who priced their enlogistic verses "above everything else. The bards held positions of high trust and often instrumental in warding off unnecessary blood-shed.[147] Many succeeded in putting an end to impending conflicts.[148] Some poets stimulated the military ardour of their patrons and thereby stimulated hostilities.[149] Another bard prays for the long life not only of his patron but also his adversaries in fight because the latter are like!y to give his patron Lord, ample scope for the exhibition of his military skill.[150] The poetess Avvaiyar was

147 Purananuru : 45

148 Ibid ; 90.

149 Ibid ; 172.

150 Ibid ; 95.

such a devoted friend of the Chieftain Atikaman Neduman Anji and stood by him that he sent her once on an ambassadorial duty to Tondaiman of Kanchi. A war was imminent between the two. Avvai went to Kanchi and by her tact succeeded in averting the war.[151] An interesting instance is provided by an "episode that could be pieced together from scattered verses in the Purananuru.[152] It recounts how a Civil War between an aged king and his two sons who hungered for his empty chair was averted and how thereafter the King abdicated and decided to end his life by fasting Some of his faithful nobles and poets joined the King in this act of self-immolation. This episode raises interesting questions both as regards as date as its value as a document throwing light on the influence that the poet had on the Kingdom.

When Vaiyavikkoperumpehan, the Chieftain of Podni, abandoned his virtuous wife on account of his infatuation for a dancing girl leading poets like Kapilar and Paranar boldly interceded with the Chieftain and succeeded in winning him over to the righteous path.[153] When the Muventhar of Tamilagam mounted a joint assault on Parambu, the principality of the Chieftain Pari, Kapilar, the court poet stayed within the Parambu and relieved the acute food shortage within the fort by sending out trained parrots to fetch food grains from the standing crops in distant fields. After the fall of Pari, he took charge of his daughters.[154]

The children of Malaiyaman, Tirumiutikkari were captured by KulamurraUutunjiya Killivalavan and they were about to be thrown to the elephants to

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[151] Ibid ; 95.

[152] Ibid ; 67, 191, 212 to 223 Kopperum Cholan and Pisir andaiyar. The poet died along with the King, by fasting.

[153] Ibid; pp.143, 147.

[154] Op. cit : 105, 113, 120, 158, 176, 200 – 202, 236, 337

be trampled upon. But Kovurkilar the poet interceded on behalf of the children and saved them.[155]

The status of the elite has to be evaluated from two points of view-ritual status and actual status in terms of economic power. The poets and military commanders were recipients of royal gifts which increased their economic status. That the King was at liberty to give away the revenues, is clear from the gifts of Imayavaramban and Narmuti to their respective poets.[156] Perhaps the lands given to Kapilar and Kaimanar were royal domains The beginning of the big land-Lord(Janmi) might be traced, to the Cheraman's rewards to the poets, and the settlement of the Brahmins by Atukotpattu and Seivakatunko. The Elite Sanror should have gradually become powerful economically. They were recognised for their knowledge of the letters and the rewards were on merit.

The four Vedic branches of Brahmanical religion were already having a place in Tamil society. The Brahmins performed Vedic fire sacrifices. But the influence of the Brahmins was limited only to the upper strata of society. By and large, the Velan Ananku and primitive rituals were popular with the masses. Hence the ritual status of the Brahmins or indigenous priests was not enough to elevate him to the status of an Elite. At any rate, the officiating Brahmin at royal sacrifices did not command the status of the North Indian priest. Hence, ritual status in early Tamilagam was not a passport to the honour of an Elite to command reverence from the King.

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155 Sirupanattuppadai; 110 – 111; 95 Nattrinai : 320 Ahananuru : 35, 209

156 Pathittuppattu : 13, 24 – 27, 41, 43, 58, 62, 69, 75, 77, 90.

Such information that the Classics provide gives us an idea of the influence that the Elite had over the ruler. The response of the Political Elites to particular situations was unpredictable. Some kind of responses led to accommodation of new demands, while other responses lead to disaster. Secure of confidence and royal support, some unscrupulous bards played one party against the other. Sometimes the demands become so intense that no response could result in peaceful accommodation. In the transitional, early Tamilian society, the Elite served as an agency to create and structure new norms of behaviour. The Elite played a considerable part in the rule-application and rule adjudication functions.

Political Divisions

Tamilagam was divided into Nadus like Chola Nadu. Chera Nadu. Pandya Nadu, Tondai Nadu, Kongu Nadu and the like, Kurram as a territorial division was a group of villages (Ur) Muttur Kurram, Milalai-Kurram are some of the divisions mentioned in the Purananuru.[157] It is difficult to say if Koitani[158] (Goshtam,) was after all a corruption of the Kurram (Kottam = Kodu +am) meaning a 'protected place or assembly hall comparable to a Mantram or Sittur Mantram with a protective fence or wall added.

Evidences of villagers looking after local affairs are available in the Classics. For transacting public business, they met in Potu-yil (literally, common place). Wandering bards and poets on their mission to meet Kings and Chieftains while passing through villages rested in these public places. There was a sort of policing of these villages and the watch and ward went round the place during nights with lamp in hand.[159] It is also claimed that a poem in Akananuru (poem 77)refers pointedly to the Kudavolai system.

157 Purananuru : 24

158 Ibid : 209, 245 (Kottambalattu – Tunjiya Makkotai)

159 Ibid : 77

From what has been described so far based on available literary evidences at our command, the absence of a well settled administrative machinery (Bureaucracy) is patent 'Bureaucrati-zation' is the very essence of political progress.[160] “Bureaucracy” refers to the elaborate organisation through which rule-makers or rulers seek to implement their decisions. In Tamil polity of the Sangam-age, there is no such mention in the Classics of an elaborate organisation. Evidently the King or Chieftain must have relied upon prestige, persuasion, or material inducement as a way of his orders carried out or his requests fulfilled.

The life of the people is essentially rural and wealth is reckoned by flocks and herds and we find few traces of the public interest and concentrated population that characterise a modern state. Perhaps we may provisionally conclude that the State appears ripe indeed for formation but not yet really formed. All the materials are there, but the building as yet is not complete. If this is granted, the Classics picture for us in outline at least the features of the Kingship of a new-born State. The demand for political action has been limited. Mostly, war leadership required political action, but the causes for war was neither economic nor religious touching the general interests of the populace, but the causes were personal. The conflicts are sometimes petty and insignificant, but they loom larged in the eyes of the public when the parties involved in them are men of rank or distinction. Thus when we speak of war, we are reminded not of petty sciffles but some military action of greater import and with more serious consequences.

Craving for power and desire for expansion seem to have motivated war in some instances.[161] The most important cause perhaps is the love for fame. The

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[160] The decisive reason for the advance of bureaucratic organisation has always been purely its technical superiority over any other form of organisation. The fully developed bureaucratic mechanism compares with other organizations. Exactly as does the machine with the non-mechanical mode of production. Max Weber : From Max Weber Essays in Sciology. ed. Hans H. Gerth and C wright Mills (New York OVE, 1958) P. 214

[161] Purananuru ; 8, 76, 31; Kalittokai : 68.

disparaging talk indulged in by the adversary is also a cause for war[162] The Kings promptly crushed disobedience and defiance of every kind. Refusal to give girls in marriage on the demand of Kings and Chiefs was yet another cause of war.[163] Sometimes, the jealousy born of the greatness or fame of an adversary, was also an inducement to wage war. The three Kings of Tamilagarn mounted a joint offence against the Chieftain, Pari merely because the latter acquired great renown as a benign ruler and munificent giver. Religious and commercial rivalries are almost absent as far as the evidences from the Classics are concerned.

Demands for political action (Interest Articulation) depended on personal motives. Sometimes the Elite tickled the vanity of the ruler and stimulated such demands. Traditional patterns of behaviour social, economic, religious, familial and political were still in vague. Hence the demand for political action from the populace was very littie. The flow of demands into the political system was not handled by specialised agencies but by poets and others (Elite), family and lineage heads. To a sympathetic student of Sangam Literature it would be clear that the ethical, moral and spiritual virtues that were formulated by the exemplars (Elite) were not theoretical, but indeed were an inevitable code of social behaviour for people. The virtues and gracious qualities that were inculcated by the Elite into royalty and laity alike were the real sheet anchor on which the stamina of the society and its genius for a perpetual regeneration of these values were based.

The picture that we are able to get of the political set up of the Sangam age presents the following characteristics. The State appears ripe for formation but not yet really formed. The political scene consists of dominant crowned monarchs as well as Chieftains. The Chieftains were a traditionally organised political factor and not a

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[162] Purananuru ; 72, 78, 200.

[163] Example of Pari, the daughters of whom provoked war.

product of monarchical weakness. The structure was exposed to environmental challenges. There is neither a specialised bureaucracy nor a specialised army. It reflects the multifunctional characteristic of Kingships and Chieftainships of primitive and traditional societies. Ascription of particular statuses and diffuse and particularistic relationships are noticeable. The Political Elites played a considerable part in influencing the leader. Demand for political action arose out of personal considerations or on the persuasion of the Elite and seldom generated from the masses. The system was authoritarian and paternalistic and specialised political input structures were conspicuously limited or absent. The extractive capability took the form of service and tribute. Law-making being absent. Law had to be discovered and administered. The enforcement of 'Law discovered' was mostly by the attendants of the King and not by a specialised officialdom. The adjudication and rule application was done by the King guided by the Elite, with all these limitations when compared to chronologically later systems the extractive, regulative, distributive, symbolic and responsive capabilities were considerable. In addition to the produce of his own royal estates, the King received a portion of the harvest and of livestock, gifts from subordinates, war-booty taxes on Caravans and foreign traders, labour levies on his population for the maintenance and repair of royal estates and palaces. The distributive capability was in part tied up with the extractive capability and symbolic-capability. The commoners were the beneficiaries of non-material distribution. In general, the system tended to make the King appear to be a man of extra-ordinary power and sacred virtue. The population was on the whole loyal and submissive.

In Sangam Polity, the 'Chieftainces' are specialised components of a larger and relatively integrated whole but come very close to being independent political arrangements. Feudal systems (though at a higher level of differentiation and seculari-zation) tend to be loosely related aggregations of relatively independent patrimonial

systems. The term 'Feudalism' has been used with a wide variety of meanings.[164] The typical historical origins of feudal systems help us explain their characteristics.[165] Since they occur at the margin of disintegrating civilizations, the forms of Government lend to be more advanced than those of primitive and tribal systems. The component units of these systems tend to be patrimonial in character; each vassal tends to be the lord over his lands and peasants. If feudal systems are to be understood as arising out of previously existing centralized bureaucratic empires, the Sangam political .structure is not certainly Feudalistic.

During the Sangam age in Tamil history, we find a transition of the tribal society into a higher form of stable political organisation. It is certainly not the revival of a society whose polity has gone into extreme disintegration. In the case of Feudalism the disintegrating polity had always been a great empire. The nuclear part of the Sangam society gains its political vigour without resort to feudal methods. Feudalism is a phenomenon of the margin of a civilised society fallen into decline. But in the case of the Sangam polity, the entire society is ripe for the formation of the State in which the leaders status, power and influence have become more or less well-defined and crystallised.

Max Weber, the German sociologist distinguishes three main types of traditional authority namely patriarchal, patrimonial and Feudal.[166] A patriarchal system of authority is one in which membership is based on Kinship and in which authority is exercised by the eldest male. It is characterized by the complete absence of administrative staff. A patrimonial system is one in which there is an administrative staff, specialized roles and offices of one kind or another which are directly controlled by the ruler. Feudalism is defined by Weber as a system of relations of purely personal

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[164] Max Weber: Theory of Social and Economic Organisation (New York; 1947) pp 373 ff

[165] Rushton Coulborn; (ed) Feudalism in History Princeton, 1970, pp.304 365.

[166] Webet, op. cit; pp.341 ff.

loyalty between a lord and his vassals. Both lord and vassals are patrimonial rulers; they are loosely articulated one with the other by bonds of mutual obligation. In Weber's threefold classification of traditional authority, the significant dimensions of variation are structural differentiation and autonomy of parts.

From the information in the Sangara works, as said before, three stages are discernible in the evolution of Monarchy, namely Tribal leadership, Chieftaincy and nascent monarchy (Arasit) represented by the office of the Muventar. Sangam polity cannot be described as fendalistic. It embeds some characteristics of a patriarchal and patrimonial systems. From the detailed analysis of a polity, it is evident that it resembled a segmentary lineage system more complex than merely patriarchal or patrimonial. It approximates a pyramidal arrangment, fluid in nature primarily because it was 'transitional and secondarily because it changed too frequently with every tilt of the kaleidoscope effected by never-ending internecine wars. One can not jump to the conclusion that nothing was definitive nor concrete.

The political jolts and frequent overturns did not break the chain of development of the tribal leader evolving into a social captain exhibiting feautures of a monarchical system. The office of the King was the product of internal demands social and economic of a society getting itself transformed into higher strata of political structures, incorporating in the growth process traditional pattern and the environmental challenges. To this extent, it was native to the soil, nurtured by the culture of the Tamilian society of that early epoch. It can best be described as an Omni functional Social System.

CHAPTER - III

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

Introduction

By the term 'Ancient Tamils' it is meant in this study, the Tamils about whom the earlist extant Tamil literary works portray. It is possible to glean out of the ancient Tamil literary sources like the Sangam Classics, the Epics of Silappadikaram and Manimegalai, and the Tirukkural, that the ancient Tamils had well organised system of administrative institutions.

The source material for the present study is collected from the Ettuttogai and Pattuppattu, Tirukkural and the Epics, Silappadikaram and Manimegalai. The reconstructed picture of the administrative system on the basis of the materials available in those works, is a rosy one, even at the dawn of the history of the country. As much, it may not be out of place to discuss the evolution of the administrative mechanism prior to the analysis of the nature and significance of the administrative system of the ancient Tamils.[167]

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[167] Kalittokai; 103: 19; Puram 208; 5; 138 : 6; 48:5; 42:18 etc.

Evolution of the Administrative System

The form of Government of the ancient Tamils, as gleaned out of literature is monarchy. So it is essential to investigate the origin and evolution of the institution of monarchy on the basis of the available data. Concrete data to probe the origin and evolution are not available, and as such the conclusions can only be a 'near-accurate' hypothesis. But however, it must be borne in mind that the sophisticated system of monarchy as it existed in ancient Tamilakam of the Classics would not have come into existence all of a sudden. It could have only evolved out of some primitive forms of authority, and an attempt is made in this paper to probe into those early forms from which the sophisticated monarchical form of adminstration of the ancient Tamils attained perfection during' the Sangam Age.

In the Sangam Classics and other literary masterpieces, there are certain words and expressions; and references to certain institutions, on the basis of which we have to reconstruct the past. The epithets for the King (mannan) are 'Ko, Kavalan, irai> iraivan, and Porunan. Of these words, Ko means a chief like that of poninan which too means the same. Kovalan means one who is guarding or protecting. The words irai and iraivan have two meanings, God and King. These words are meaningful and help us to interpret the probable basis for the evolution of the administrative institution of monarchy.

During the period, prior to the one described by the Sangam works, the Tamils might have settled in groups, in places they chose for their settlements. At that stage, they might not have come out of the tribal characteristics. Each settled groups had their own strong men who were kos or chiefs, whose main responsibility might have been providing protection to the people who trusted and chose them as their leaders. Therefore, such people were considered as the Kavalars or protectors. In course of time, such leaders who won the confidence of the people were considered as equivalent to

Gods; and hence the appellations irai and iraivan. Another factor that help us to assume the above stage in the evolution of monarchy is the word used to mention the home of the Kings and Gods. The commonly mentioned word is koyil[168] Even today the word is used to refer to the palace of the members of the erst-while royal families in Kerala is Kovilakam.

One of the important stages in the declaration of war is mentioned as Karantai[169]. This practice of lifting the cattle-wealth of the group against whom war is to be declared, clearly indicates the character of the Chief or King whose predecessor at the earlier period was the head of group with cattle-wealth. Again, Kol is one of the symbols of Kingship.[170] The stick that was in the custody of the chief of the shepherds might have evolved into the rod of the King when monarchy became the established institution. If the King uses his powers justly, the sceptre or rod becomes Chenkol and if otherwise, Kodumkol[171] Similar to the sceptre, another symbol of royalty mentioned is the White Umbrella.[172] This Umbrella might have probably been considered as the symbol of the protecting character of the chief when the community might probably become a settled one, wedded to agriculture.

The sovereign authority of the monarchy is mentioned in Sangam classics as tayam.[173] The meaning of this term lay am illustrates the close relationship between the chief and his people in the initial stages of the evolution of the institution, monarchy.[174] Another practice that existed among, the ancient Kings was the performance of a

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168 Puram: 46:10; 241;3 etc.

169 Akam: 159:5-8 & Tolkappiyam, Porul : Sutram 61.

170 Patirruppattu : 89 : 9.

171 Puram : 230 : 4 ; Kalittokai : 8; 2.

172 Patirruppattu: 17;13.

173 Puram: 99: 7 & its commenatry.

174 Tayattar and tayati, indicating close and blood relations originated from this word.

ceremony in the battle field after a successful war, known as kalavelvi.[175] The ceremony as found in the references illustrates the cruel nature of its performance, in which the parts of human body are mentioned to have been used for the preparation of the ritual rice for the celebrations. This has induced scholars like A. L. Basham to infer whether the Tamils were cannibals, once.[176]

In the light of the above discussions, it is possible to posit a hypothesis that 'the institution of monarchy in ancient Tamilagam evolved even during the primitive stage in the culture of the Tamils, when they were depending on the cattle-wealth, prior to the stage of the rise of the rice culture, that might probably the second stage in the development of their culture. ' ft might be during the second stage that the Ko or the Chief with the stick or kol to maintain the cattle-wealth of the community settled down. This stage is symbolised by the umbrella which the chief had to protect himself from the heat and rain. Umbrella, the venkotta kudai is also mentioned as a symbol of monarchy.

175 Pathittuppattu Colophon : IV : II

176 Basham, A.L. The Wonder That Was India, p. 62

From the foregoing discussions, another factor that emerges is the development, of the institution of the divine right that the monarch was supposed to possess. This institution, popularly described as the Devaraja Cult might have originated among the Tamils during this epoch. This institution was the corner-stone of the administrative system in the South-eastern countries. Even now this institution prevails in the administrative institutions in Thailand. This institution might probably have been originated in ancient Tamilakam. Such a conclusion is possible, for the King and the God are mentioned as Iraivan and their abode as 'koyil' in Tamil.

Therefore, the evolution of monarchy among the Tamils might have taken place in two stages. In the first stage, when they were in the nomadic stage depending on their cattle-wealth, they had their own chiefs represented by the stick which in the chief possessed. During the second stage, the agricultural stage, the chief might have assumed the role of the protector of the community, symbolised by the umbrella, that he possessed. Thus, the stick and the umbrella, the kol and kudai the symbolic representation of sovereignty, the irai help us to determine the origin and evolution of the institution of monarchy in ancient Tamilakam.

The above discussions on the institution of monarchy and its probable origin and evolution are sufficient to establish the validity of the hypothesis posited in this study. Therefore, it is not wrong to suppose that the institution of monarchy and its other attributes like the divine right attached to it had their origin in the culture of the Tamils, even when they were still in their primitive stage of their culture.

Types of Administrative Institutions

Monarchy was the institution of administrative mechanism among the ancient Tamils. Even in the case of monarchy, there are two types, as can be reconstructed from the literary works. Among the rulers of ancient Tamilagam, only three are mentioned as

'crowned heads, while others were lesser dignitaries. The Chera, Chola and Pandya Kings are mentioned as the crowned heads of

Tamilagam, other rulers like the Ay, Antiran, Athikaman Nedumananci, Pehan, Ori and others are mentioned as chieftains, either independent or vassal rulers.

Besides the two types that are of a general nature, technically also, a typology is possible. While the administrations represented by the above categories of rulers pertain only to the central administration. The problem of the local administration needs an analytical study. Thus, a typology is possible on the basis of the nature of the administrative institutions at the centre and the peripheries.

Thus, the administrative system of the Tamils during the Sangam epoch can be typed as the central administration and local administration; and also as the government by the crowned Kings and Chieftains, referred to as Kurunila Mannar.

Central Government

The central government during the Sangam age was monarchical in form, whether it is of the form of crowned kingdom or that of a vassal state. The ancient conception of monarchy was that it resembled the Universe, for it was believed that just as the Universe is composed of five elements, the monarch was expected to have five qualities like patience, diplomacy, steadfastness in defence, decisiveness in battle and sympathetic and helpful temperament'.[177] The ruler was always expected to follow virtuous and righteous principles of polity, because the life of his subjects would be awful, if he happened to be unrighteous in his attitude towards administration.[178] But such instances were rare, because the poets and other wise men always used to involve themselves in the administration by tendering advice to the ruler to be righteous.[179] Succession to the throne must be through proper and

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[177] Puram : 2 : 6-8.

[178] Pathittu : 85; 9 – 10 & Kalittogai : 5 : 12

[179] Puram : 5 : 5-6. In these lines the poets advise the King to have good friends and should head to their advice. Maduraikkanchi 525 – 526 & Kallittogai : 27 : 7 - 8

virtuous means and one's right to be the head of the state was hereditary.[180] Most probably, the principle of primogeniture might have been followed in the matter of succession to the throne, though explicit references do not find a place in the literary works. The ancient Tamil society and vis-a-vis the royal family did follow the principle of patrilineal succession. In the case of the Chera kingdom, a few futile attempts have been made by certain scholars to establish that the pattern of succession was matrilineal.[181] But there are concrete evidences to show that in the Chera country also, the pattern of succsssion was patrilineal.[182]

Personal Life and Privileges of the Kings

The King was absolute and enjoyed a number of privileges. He was the custodian of peace and possessed private properties in. addition to his position as the feudal lord of the entire landed territories. He lived in fortified palace. The fort was surrounded by a deep moat containing crocodiles and a protective forest beyond the moat.[183] He was the patron of poets, musicians and dancers. In this capacity he enjoyed music and dance. Personally a few monarchs seemed to be licentious, while others lived a strenuous life. It seems monogamy and polygamy were the patterns of family life of the Kings[184]

Principles of Public Administration

The King was the head of the state and wielded enormous powers in the fields of legislation, execution and judiciary, The sceptre and the royal seal were symbolic of the

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180 Pathittu : 74 : 17 – 21 & Puram : 99 : 7 - 8

181 S. Somasundara Bharati has tried to establish in the thesis that matrilineal pattern of succession existed in Chera country in his Cherar Taya Murai.

182 M. Raghavaiyangar’s Cheran Senguttuvan and the present author’s Culture of the Ancient Cheras for a detailed discussion on the subject.

183 Pathittu : 53 : 7 – 9.

184 Pathittu : 21 : 37; 38 : 10; 42 : 7; 57 : 10 – 13 & Puram 127 : 5.

supreme authority of the monarch in these fields.[185] The monarch was strict in following the principle of righteousness in administering the State. The concept of righteousness is embodied in the concept aram stressed to be the basic tenet of administration by the poets in the Sangam verses.[186] The most important duties of the King are the protection to be accorded to the cattle grazing the pastures travellers passing through the arid tracts, harvested paddy lying in the ground after being thrashed; and defence of the country, its people and wealth from the attack of the enemies.[187]

In the task of administering the state, the monarch used to get the support of the advisers, like the ministers, wise-men and poets.[188] In certain cases, a wise and able minister in a State enjoyed more respect than the royal chaplain.[189] Besides, there occurred popular discussions in the royal courts among learned and wise men.[190] From this reference about the popular discussions in the royal court, it is possible to infer that such discussions might have been organised by the Kings themselves with a view to know the prevailing public opinion and to formulate righteous principles for governing the country. There seemed to have a few Kings who were wise enough to advise even the learned ascetic.[191]

In addition to the duties mentioned above, the monarch was responsible for the defence of the country; In discharging this duty, the King was expected to organise certain diplomatic measures. In the conduct of foreign policy, the king made use of the services of the diplomats. The King used to send embassies to other countries; and even poets seemed to have served as ambassadors as can be learnt from the part played by

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185 Pathittu : 80 : 9; & Puram : 99 : 7.

186 Puram : 62 : 7; 134 : 2

187 Kalittogai : 8 : 1 - 2

188 Pathittu : 70 : 17; 72 : 5 ; 74 : 24

189 Pathittu : Colophon : IX : 11 - 12

190 Maduraikkanchi : 525 - 526

191 Pathittu : 74 : 26 - 28

the poetess Avvaiyar, as the representative of her patron, Atiyaman Nedu-mananci to the court of Tondairnan.[192] Apart from the functions discharged by ambassadors, the Sangam monarchs made use of the services of spies. Men of ability and knowledge were employed by the Kings to do espionage work; and such men used to discharge their duties silently and secretly.[193]

From the foregoing points, it can be deduced that the ancient monarchy, though absolute was not at all an autocracy The Kings were benevolent personalities who were paternal despots doing benevolent measures and welfare activities to provide amenities to their subjects.

Revenue Administration

No state can function without adequate financial resources. Tamilagam of the Sangam age, by all accounts seemed to have been in an advanced stage of economic prospects and freedom. Though there are a few stray references to the conditions of poor poets, generally speaking, the economic situation in the country was one of economic prosperity. In such a State, it is no wonder to find the Government running smoothly. Whether the ancient Tamils were aware of providing a budget for running the administration or not, the details that can be gathered from the verses illustrate that the King, as the head of government enjoyed the confidence of the people who contributed towards the acquisition of public revenue to be spent on welfare activities and the defence of the country.

One of the chief sources of revenue of the King was the share of the produce from land. In this respect, it should be remembered that the State's share in the produce from land is not explicity stated in any of the Sangam verses. There is only a single reference in Purananuru about the share of the King from the produce of

192 The Colophon of Puram : 95

193 Akam : 315 : 15.

the land. The term mentioned is patuvatu untu and it was interpreted by commentator that the term mentions the share of the King as one sixth of the produce.[194] Probably, the conclusion of the commentator can be accepted, for in later epochs in the history of Tamilagam, whenever the share of the government from land is mentioned, it was pointed out as one sixth of the produce from land, either in kind or cash. This practice of a later period might have probably induced the commentator to say that the term patuvatuuntu indicated the one sixth of the produce from land.[195] Besides land tax, the ancient Kings had under their control, a number of forest territories and the income from such forests belonged to the monarch.[196] Products from the royal forests, mountains, arable lands and the ocean also formed the wealth of the monarch.[197]

Trade and commerce formed another important source of public revenue. References about the ports, harbours and the warehouses that existed in such places are abundant, and therefore it can be inferred that a flourishing internal and international trade existed in Tamilagam during the Sangam period. Customs duties were collected at the harbours, probably in return for the amenities provided to the merchants at the ports.[198] In the sphere of internal commercial pursuits also, tax was collected in return for the protection provided to the caravan of merchants who moved through the highways and arid tracts, by posting sentinels at strategic points in the highways.[199]

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194 Puram : 17 : 6 & Its Commentary

195 Inscriptions of the Later Pandyas and Later Cholas

196 Pathittu : 73 : 12 – 13 & Its Commentary

197 Puram : 343 : 7 – 9; Pathittu : 87 : 2 & Nattinai 391 : 7 & Their Commentaries

198 Pattinappalai : 135 - 136

199 Perumpanattuppadai : 66 - 68

Besides, the State got revenue from two other 'important sources one in the form of booty from war, and the other by the confiscation of the properties belonging to persons who died without proper heirs to succeed them.[200] There are a number of references in the Sangam verses depicting the sad state of affairs that would befall a fallen hero in a battle. The country of the vanquished ruler, in most of the cases was plundered by the victorious army, in addition to the large amount of booty of war that would be collected from the defeated King[201] Therefore, it may not be incorrect to conclude that the Sangam age depicts an epoch of transition from a tribal set up.

From the above references, it can be concluded that the public revenue of the ancient states in Tamilakam, though mentioned as the wealth of the king, was in essence the revenue of the State, for it was spent on improving the living conditions of the people. Our analysis of the revenue administration will not be complete without noting the items on which the revenue collected was spent. Though the ancient Kings of Tamilakam were not in the habit of providing yearly budgets to administer their kingdoms, it can be stressed that they had understood the principles underlying the preparation of a wise budget. If the yardstick of measuring the ability of a state is on the basis of the standard of life of the people and the general economic prosperity of the State, then it can be well said that the ancient monarchs of Tamilagam and their ministers were expert innovators in the art of financial administration. They seemed to have been guided by the principle of providing a welfare system of administration to their respective States.
The revenue raised by them through different measure was spent on welfare activities.

Public revenue was spent wisely to provide a clean administration and protection to the subjects. It is mentioned that nobody harmed any of his fellow men and coveted

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200 Puram : 367 : 2- 3

201 Pathittu : 80 : 12 – 13; 21 : 17 – 19 & Puram : 17 : 6 & 8

the possessions of the other.[202] If such a situation should prevail, then definitely the State should provide protection and equal opportunities to all the citizens. Another reference mentions that the people would assemble to construct bun to check the floods in rivers, as soon as drums were beaten to inform that the river was flooded.[203] This reference indicates the civic consciousness of the people and the spirit of co-operation that prevailed among the people. Indirectly it shows the role of the administration in instilling such a spirit among the people. The State considered it as its onerous duty to foster economic prosperity by encouraging development programmes for the prosperity of its subjects.[204] Other welfare schemes included the protection and patronage accorded to agriculture and fishing. The State undertook measures to construct dams, culverts and sluices to provide irrigation facilities to foster agriculture.[205] The artists connected with the fine arts of music and dance enjoyed the liberal patronage of the Kings. The wandering ministrels and poets were liberally provided with presents and gifts of gold, silver and in certain cases with lands.[206] It has to be inferred from the nature of the Sangam works that the people were educated and cultured. Education and the spread of culture among the people were in the hands of the wandering minstrels and the poets. By the practice of giving liberal grants and presents to the poets and wandering minstrels, the Kings performed their obligation of providing education and advanced cultural standards to the people.

From the above discussion on the sources of public revenue and the wise spending of the same, it can be concluded that the revenue administration that existed in ancient Tamilagam of the Sangam age was definitely a balanced one. But at the same

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202 Patirru : 22 : 7 – 8.

203 Ibid : 22 : 28.

204 Op. Cit., : 32 : 7 & 31 : 13 – 14.

205 Pathittu : 279 ; Akam ; 208; Puram : 375 : 6; Pathittu: 13 ; 22 – 24; 48 : 4 & Their Commentaries

206 Puram 171 : 8 – 11; Pathittu : 48 :1 ; 67 : 3- 4 ; 22 64 : 8 – 10 & Nattri 185 : 3 – 4.

time, it should not be forgotten that tribal instincts like the conduct of plundering and destroying the country of the vanquished at the end of the war too prevailed.

Police and Judicial Administration

The nature and significance of the system of police administration was one of providing protection to the people in every walk of life. A well-knitted system of posting sentinels to protect the people through-out the country was planned and executed.[207] Sentinels were posted to guard the forts and particular vulnerable points and such sentinels patrolled the areas allotted to them throughout the night.[208] Sentinels were usually stalwarts and had the ability to catch the robbers who could flee like the wind.[209] Without a wink of sleep or fear, the sentinels posted to the duty of watch and ward during the night were provided with lamps, ladders and bells to spy out and catch the criminals from their hiding places.[210] The accounts available in the literary works of the Sangam age depict a clean picture about the network of police personnel who discharged their duties with diligence. They seemed to have worked without fear and even without a wink of sleep.

No law book of the Sangam period has been preserved. Except Tirukkural the law book of the Tamils containing the moral code and a sophisticated legal system that can be operated at all times, no other law book that can be claimed as an ancient one is available. Even in the case of Tirukkural, scholars do not agree on the exact date to which it belongs. Most of the scholars consider it as a post-Sangam work. But there is no harm in considering it as one that is embodying the principles of the legal and moral code that was in vogue during the Sangam period. The cardinal principle of law in that divine work is righteousness or aram. Persons who administered justice during the

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207 Pathittu 81 : 9 - 11

208 Pathittu : 16 : 1 – 2; 28 ; 4 – 5 & 81 : 9 - 11

209 Maduraikkanci : 636 – 639 ; Puram : 37 : 9

210 Puram : 37 : 9; Nattri : 132 : 8 – 9 ; Perumpanarruppadai : 66 – 68 & 76

Sangam period were governed by the principles of equity embodied in the word, aram. It seems that the King himself personally administered justice in most of the cases righteously without fear or favour and without delay.[211] His sceptre was symbolic of his impartial judicial administration and was expected to keep the rod of justice straight by punishing the wrong doers.[212]

Apart from personally administering justice, the Kings used to appoint men learned in law and equity to administer justice. A Pandya King mentions that he should be put into the boiling water for having appointed an unscrupulous person as judge in his court of justice.[213] From this statement of the King, it is possible to infer that the Kings used to appoint judges, who were men of virtues. It was expected that men who administered justice to be simple and virtuous in their dealings; and they should pronounce judgements impartially, like a balance.[214] The judges were expected to be capable of freeing the minds of the disputed parties from fear and feelings of despair.[215]

For the administration of justice, there seemed to have existed separate institutions at the central and local levels. The daily assembly, called the Nalavai of the King might be the institution in which the King heard the complaints of the disputed parties and disposed off the cases.[216] The people had the practice of presenting their disputes in person before the assembly of the King for redressal of their grievances.[217] It can therefore be inferred that the custom of presenting cases on definite charges to the courts was in vogue during the Sangam period. Moreover, it seemed to be a practice in the ancient courts of justice, for disputants themselves

211 Puram : 230 : 1 – 4 ; 99 ; 7 & Pathittu 89 : 9.

212 Ibid.

213 Puram, 71 : 7 - 9

214 Puram, 35 : 14 - 16

215 Madurai, 489 - 492

216 Pathittu, 38 : 9 & Its Commentary

217 Puram : 71 : 7 – 9 & 35 : 14 – 16 & Commentaries

arguing their cases, and therefore the question of deputing counsels to argue the cases might not have existed. Such an inference is possible from the conversation between a lover and the friend of his lady love, who desired that the lovers should not meet often. The reply of the lover was that if he took the case to the court of justice and argued that his lady love was evading him, then she could not defend herself.[218]

The courts of justice during the Sangam period inflicted punishments varying from imprisonment to inflicting capital punishments. It can be inferred from the imprisonment of a Chera King by a Pandyan monarch that imprisonments as a measure of inflicting punishment was usually resorted to by the administrators of justice during the period under discussion.[219]

Harsh and cruel punishments were also inflicted by the judges, even in certain trivial matters. In one instance, the eyes of an individual was put out simply because his herd of cattle grazed in the field belonging to another individual[220] In another case, Nannan, a chieftain inflicted capital punishment on a girl who ate the mango fruit from the 'guardian tree' of the chieftain unknowingly, even after the parents of the girl were prepared to offer him an image of the girl in gold as compensation for the mistake of the girl.[221] These instances show that the administration of justice during the Sangam age might have been crude and illogical at least in certain cases. But at the same time, there are references indicating that culprits were punished only after checking and verifying the charges leveled against them, and after analysing them in the light of precedents.[222] Therefore, it can be concluded that the nature of judicial administration was of a mixed character, a combination of harshness and humanism.

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218 Kuruntogai : 276 : 5 - 6

219 Op.cit; 45.

220 Akam : 246 : 4 – 5 & Its Commentary

221 Kurun : 292 : 1 – 5.

222 Puram : 29 ; 9 – 10.

Military Administration and Operations

The monarchs of the Sangam period possessed both a standing army and a militia that was mobilised at the time of wars. The permanent standing army was a four-fold one comprising of the infantry, cavalry, elephant corps and chariots.[223] In addition, they might have possessed the militia of brave men with scars of victorious wars, and they assembled- on hearing battle cries, to march directly to the battle-field.[224] The army was organised with different regiments. Each one had a specific duty to perform and was composed of different categories of people. But the soldiers who composed the army were brave, heroic and cosmopolitan; and all of them acquired good training in the art of war tactics.[225]

One of the regiments, the vanguard was in charge of construction of roads in the highways and arid tracts so that the other regiments could move without any difficulty.[226] Iyavar was the regiment in the army which beat the drums and played the musical instruments and the other one blew the bugles.[227] The soldiers of the ancient Tamil army were from the social divisions like Mallar, Malavar, Maravar, and the men from Konku and Bull lands.[228]

We have already noticed that mobilisation of army was a method adopted to pool the military resources, when a war broke out. There seemed to have existed the practice of sending one person from each house to defend the country during times of war.[229] In one reference, a heroic woman sent her only son to the war front when she

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223 Puram : 63 : 1 – 4 & Pathittu : 52 : 2.

224 Pathittu : 40 : 3 – 4.

225 Pathittu : 12 : 1; 15: 20 – 21; 26 : 14 ; 38; 10 & Akam : 212 : 14 – 15 etc; & Puram 169 : 1- 4.

226 Pathittu : 19 : 1 – 2.

227 Pathittu : 19 ; 7 - 8

228 Op.cit. 59.

229 Puram : 279 : 3- 7 & 10 – 11.

heard the battle cry, as her father and husband were killed in the battles previously.[230] Therefore, it can be concluded that the practice of mobilising soldiers during times of war did exist. On hearing battle cries trained men used to assemble for marching towards the battle field and the other steps like encamping them and providing necessary amenities to such persons followed. These soldiers were stationed in camps, situated In fertile lands or near the forts of the enemies and logs of wood were used 10 be burnt to provide warmth in such camps.[231] The soldiers in the camps were provided with musical performances and dunce recitals, so that the soldiers felt relieved of isolation and monatotiy.[232] In the camps proper attention was given to nurse the wounded soldiers, even during the night, with the help of lamps.[233] The King used to inspect such camps personally to relieve the soldiers from their agony and despair and it was the custom to consol the wounded soldiers personally by the monarch.[234]

The weapons of war during the Sangam period, were bow and arrow, swords. lances, shields and armours.[235] Most of the soldiers were well versed in the use of these weapons, and therefore it can be inferred that military training centres might have existed and imparted training in the use of the different kinds of the weapons of war.[236] As a protective measure, the soldiers used shield and armour. The Tamil words used to denote the shield in the Sangam verses are tol and palakai.[237] Meymarai is the word used for armour.[238] Therefore, it can be inferred that the shields might have been made of wood and eather or in any one of the materials, while the armour

230 Ibid.

231 Pathittu 4 : 5 – 6 & 82 : 9.

232 Pathittu : 61 : 15 – 17.

233 Akam : 111 : 13 – 14.

234 Mullaippattu : 25 – 28 & Puram : 289 ; 8 – 9 & Its Commentary

235 Pathittu : 45 : 1 – 3; 45: 21 ; 50 : 9 ; 21 : 24; 19 : 4; 72 : 2 etc & Their commentaries

236 Op. cit; References 68 & 69.

237 Puram ; 63 ; 6 & 282 : 10 – 11.

238 Puram ; 21 : 24.

might have been used by all the soldiers as a protective measure to cover their bodies. It seems that the different categories of soldiers were adept in the use of the different kinds of weapons of war cited above. The sword was invariably used by the front rankers in the battle front and the chieftains who led the campaigns.[239] The soldiers who were engaged in smashing the enemy forts used the lance or spear and ladders to climb the forts.[240] Moreover, in naval warfare, the lance seemed to be a prominent weapon[241]

The soldiers used to get proper training in the use of ornaments; they equipped themselves by attaining skill in the shooting of arrows and throwing of lances by using targets like the morinka tree stalks or holed targets prepared for the purpose.[242] The soldiers used to adorn themselves with proper uniforms and a few ornaments to differentiate them from others.[243] The uniform used by the ancient soldiers might be tight fitting one, for we learn from a verse that the Pandiyas used to employ foreigners in their army and they are mentioned to have used a tight-fitting dress called meyppai.[244] Therefore, it can be inferred that other monarchs like the Cheras and Cholas too might have employed such foreign soldiers and in their rank and file also such uniforms might have been used.

The soldiers might have been paid handsomely by the ancient Kings. In return for the services rendered by the soldiers, the monarchs granted them lands for their maintenance.[245] In addition-to such gifts, the soldiers got a share of the spoils of war, as can be learnt from the reference to the effect that the soldiers also bestowed on

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239 Patirru ; 55 : 20 & Akam : 143 : 12.

240 Pathittu : 84 : 16 & Puram : 343 : 14 & Their Commentaries

241 Pathittu : 46 : 11; 88 : 5; 90 : 20

242 Puram : 169 : 9 – 11 & 4 : 5- 6

243 Pathittu : 34 : 2 & 90 : 27

244 Mullai : 60.

245 Puram : 312 : 4; 287 : 10; 229 : 5.

the bards, the spoils of war.[246] During peace time, the soldiers might have engaged themselves in some kings of anti-social activities like plundering the traveller through the arid tracts and forests, and even killing them as times.[247] To substantiate this hypothesis, it is found in literature that the soldiers would set fire to the country of the vanquished ruler, loot and devastate the paddy fields belonging to them, as a mark of their victory.[248] Therefore, it can be substantiated that the soldiers with the class appellations, Mallar, Maravar and Malavar might have engaged themselves in plundering as a means of livelihood, when they were out of their occupation (in the army during times of peace. So it is not an overwhelming conception to consider these persons who engaged themselves in atrocities during war might have engaged in such activities during times of peace by plundering the wayward travellers who went through the arid tracts.

Wars were undertaken either to expand the territories of their states or to extract tributes from less powerful princes, by the powerful monarchs.[249] In the art of military operations, the ancient monarchs followed certain systematic principles that can be understood from Tolkappiyam. It typologises the first step in the commencement of the war as vetci.[250] The first stage in the art of military operations is the confiscation of the cattle belonging to another State and this aciinvariably paved the way for a war, probably because it formed an important form of wealth to the ancient Tamils[251] The soldiers would enter the enemy fort in the night and drive away the cattle, after annihilating sentinels in the fort and the cattle thus

246 Pathittu 39 : 2.

247 Kuruntogai : 283 : 5 – 6 & Ainkurunuru : 317 : 1 - 2

248 Pathittu ; 67 – 6 & Nattri : 346 : 3 – 5 & Their Commentaries

249 Puram : 8 : 2- 3 & 5.

250 Tolkappiyam Purattinaiyiyal, Sutram : 60.

251 Pathittu : 71 : 14 – 15 & 17 - 18

confiscated would be shared among the victorious men.[252] Those who lost the cattle would not tolerate the action of their enemies and would mobilise themselves to regain their cattle and a fight would ensue and this is typologised in Tolkappiyam as kamntai.[253] Both the King and his soldiers used to make challenging vows to cut the guardian tree of the enemy and to defeat him in the battle-field; and such vows were made, even before the preliminary arrangements were made to enter the war-front.[254]

The actual war-fare of the ancient Tamils had certain principles, to be followed strictly. It was considered not at all righteous to fight against a retreating army; and the advanced army was expected to make the warning let the cows, priests, women, suffering people and persons without a male child seek proper protection just before the army marched into the enemy territory to inflict a crushing attack on him.[255] Similarly, it was not proper for a ruler to shut himself within the fort, when the enemy was at his gates, as can be learnt from the statement of the poet Kovur Killar that the ruler who refuses to take up the challenge would bring untold misery upon his people.[256] It is possible to learn that the nature of actual fighting was fierce and ruthless. The lands, forts and lastly the guardian tree of the enemy would be destroyed during the battle.[257] After attaining success in the war, it was usual to plunder the country of the vanquished. In certain cases, large number of prisoners of war would be brought to the country of the victor, to be humiliated.[258] Even the vanquished ruler

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252 Akam : 97 : 4 – 6.

253 Tolkappiyam Purattinaiyiyal Sutram 61 & Akam : 159 : 5 – 8.

254 Pathittu 30 : 30; 40: 3- 4 & Kuruntogai: 73 ; 2- 3.

255 Puram 9 : 1-6 ; 36: 10 – 11 & 13; and the Commentaries.

256 Puram ; 44 : 14 – 16, Its colophon and Commentary.

257 Pathittu : 67 : 6 Nattri: 346 : 3 – 5; Kurun : 73 – 2 – 3 etc

258 Pathittu; 350 : 12 – 13; 56 : 6 – 7 & Narri : 18 ; 2 – 4 & Their Commentaries

might not be spared; and he would be brought as a prisoner of war.[259] The most devastating act at the end of the war was the conduct of a ritual called Kalavelvi in the battle-field.[260] This ritual, as can be learnt from the verses was symbolic in nature, during which a sacrificial cooking was done in the battle-field using the parts of the fallen men as utensils.[261] The cruel nature of this ritual, compelled European scholars to think that the ancient Tamils might have been cannibals.

It is possible to conclude from the foregoing discussion, that the ancient Tamils were not aware of the art of peaceful coexistence. But the fact was that, there prevailed peace and prosperity in the country, in spite of the occurrence of incessant wars among the crowned Kings and chieftains who ruled over the different territories in Tamilagam. Such a condition became possible because of the existence of a proper and well equipped administrative machinery coupled with a sound economy providing ample scope for the citizens to lead a peaceful life.

Therefore, it can be concluded that, wars were frequent and they were devastating but they were never a hindrance to the peaceful life of the ordinary citizens.

Local Administration

Our discussions in the foregoing pages are centred round the central government headed by the King and an organised administrative mechanism that functioned under him. However, a study of the Administrative system of the ancient Tamils will not be complete without analysing the nature and significance of the local administration that existed in the villages and towns. In this aspect, it is to be remembered that the Sangam verses do not help us to probe into the type of administration that existed in towns and cities due to paucity of evidences. However, it is possible to guess and reconstruct it

259 Puram 17 : 13, 20 – 21 & Its Colophon and Commentary

260 Patirru : colophon IV : 11 & Its Commentary.

261 Ibid.

from the available data regarding the town and city life in Tarailagam of the medieval times.

The village was the smallest unit of administration during the Sangam period; and the Village Assembly known as Mantram or potuvil, was the centre of the administrative machinery in the village.[262] The Village Assembly, though served in other capacities also, played an important part in the administration of the respective village.[263] In the villages, the Assembly was used by the wandering minstrels as their resting place; and it was also the centre for the conduct of social functions like festivals and socio-political duties like the administration of justice.[264] Thus, it can be seen that village assemblies had played a vital role in the social and political life of the village.

The word potiyil or potu, like that of mantram meant the common meeting place in the village, mostly a structure formed around a banyan tree in the centre of the village, as can be learnt from the Sangam verses.[265] Therefore, we can conclude that the village assembly during the Sangam period was an 'open-air-parliament' which discussed and decided the matters of common importance concerning the entire village. It was in this assembly that the cases pertaining to the people of the village were heard and decided. The classical example available in the verses to illustrate the judicial function of the village is the assembly at Kallur.[266] The Assembly at Kallur pronounced the judgement that the youth who cheated the girl, who was his lady love, was to be bound to a tree and lime water was to be poured over his head, after hearing both the

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262 Pathittu : 23 : 5 ; Puram 89 : 7 & Commentaries.

263 Nattri : 346 : 4 – 5 & Puram : 22 : 16 – 17 & 19 ; 65 : 4 – 5; 22 : 14 – 16.

264 Op. cit. Ref. 101 & 102

265 Akam: 167 : 20; 287:5; 307:11; 373:4; 251:8; Kuru: 15:2; Madurai : 161, 206 & Murukattuppadai ; 226. & Puram 89 : 7.

266 Akam : 256 : 15 – 21.

parties, with the help of the witnesses of both the parties, who were thoroughly examined.

In the case of towns and cities, similar to the system that was in vogue in villages might have existed. In medieval times in general and the Chola times in particular, we come across the prevalence of assemblies in towns and cities known as Nakaram. Those assemblies were self-governing units of administration in which the trade and artisan guilds played an important part.[267] Still later, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries A. D., we come across the existence of a self-governing institution called Nattukkuttam in Nanjilnadu, in the modern Kanyakumari District.[268] These institutions help us to formulate a hypothesis that such institutions or similar ones that were not developed like the later ones might have been in existence in the cities and towns of ancient Tamilagam to look after the local affairs in those towns and cities. Just like the towns and cities of the Chola period, the Ancient Tamil towns and cities were also centres of trade and commerce and the domain of artisans. Therefore such a hypothesis may not be far

[267] Kenneth R. Hall's Trade and Statecraft in the Age of the Cholas.

[268] Nattukkuttam, Kerala Society Papers, Vol. XII. by Kavimani Desikavinayakam Pillai.

from reality. Therefore, we can conclude that autonomy was the order of the day among the ancient Tamils in the administrative set up in villages, towns and cities.

In the foregoing paragraphs, we have discussed the nature of the administrative system of the ancient Tamils, particularly the Sangam Tamils, as gleaned out from the Sangam verses. On the basis of the available data, we have reconstructed the evolution of the institutions of monarchy and the central government presided over by the King.

One of the salient features of the system is the fact that the Sangam period exhibits the stage of transition from the tribal traditions to that of a sophisticated model. In certain cases, just like the conduct of kalavelvi in the battlefield and the crude punishments accorded in the courts of justice whether at the local or central level, we are in a position to notice the primitive character of the administrative system of the ancient Tamils.

The details available in the Sangam verses give us the picture of a well advanced system of socio-political life that existed in ancient Tamilagam. In spite of certain short comings that have been already cited, it has to be borne in mind that the principles of a democratic set up were in practice. So the principles of public administration of the ancient Tamils seem to be a negation of the theory of separation of powers, for the combination of the three govermental powers in the same hand, viz. the monarch was never considered tyrannical during the Sangam period as against the view expressed by the French philosopher, Montesquieu.

CHAPTER - IV

KINGS AND CHIEFTAINS

The ancient Tamilagam was ruled by the three powerful monarchs, called Chera, Chola and Pandya Kings of the three monarchs, the Cheras were mentioned first. The,

early Chera dynastic history is well documented than those of the Pandyas and the Cholas. The Ten Idylls and the Eight Anthologies are the main sources for the study of the Chera Kings. Of the Eight Anthologies, the Pathittuppattu, a collection of ten decades of verses, composed by different poets, throws much light on Cheras. The first and tenth decades are not available. From the rest of the eight decades a clear picture of the achievements of the Cheras can be noticed. At the end of each decade, the name of the poet, the King on whom the decade was sung and the gift bestowed on the poet are given. The colophons found at the end of each poem may be contemporaneous or latter additions. Purananuru, Ahananuru, Kuruntogai, Nattrinai, Ainkurunuru and Kalittogai also refer to the Cheras. Palai Padiya Katunko, a Chera King himself has sung thirty five songs in Kalittogai. The work Ainkurunuru contains verses narrating the flora and fauna of the Chera country.

The Cheras ruled a part of Tamilagam, comprised of Konkunadu, North Travancore, Cochin and South Malabar. The Cheras ruled the country Vanchi as their capital. But the site of Vanchi is still a matter of controversy among scholars. Professors R. Caldwell, R. Raghava Iyangar, V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, K. A. N. Sastri and N. Subramaniayan have identified Karur a town lying in between Tiruchirappalli and Erode. Profs. V. Kanagasabbai, S. Krishnaswamy and others identify Vanchi with a place in the West Coast in the vicinity of Tiruvanjaikkalam, near Kodungallure. It may be concluded that the Cheras when became powerful, shifted their capital from the West Coast to Karur. Musiri and Tondi were the important sea-ports of the Cheras.

The Chera Kings

Pathittuppattu narrates the history of eight Chera Kings. It has two parts, viz. the Text and Patikam. The second one is a latter production. On the basis of the text, the achievements of the Kings may be studied.

Utiyan Cheral

He was the Lord of the south eastern and western coast. He sumptuously fed the hosts of both the combatants in the Mahabharatha war-the five Pandavas and the twice-fifty Gauravas. Muranjiyur Mutinakkarayar, Mamulanar, llankiranar Kottampalattu Tunciya Cheraman and llankovadikal sang in praise of Utiyan Cheral. His expeditions and extension of the empire may be studied from Agananuru, Natu Kan Akarriya Vtiyancheral. He received wound on his back in his battle against Karikal Valavan and died by starvation. Feeding the soldiers in the Mahabharata war by Utiyan Cheral is not possible. The date of the Mahabharatha war and the date of Utiyancheral may not be the same.

Imayayaramban Netuncheralatan

His generosity and dexterity are compared to that of one Akkuvan of great valour, Kama.[269] He invaded against Kadambas who lived in an island in the midst of the Ocean, defeated them and cut their Kadamba trees.[270] He cut them for making his drums.[271] The decisive battle is identified when author narrates that the back water ran red with their blood.[272] He took gems from the crown of his seven enemies to make an ornament for wearing it on his breast.[273] He is also praised as a great conqueroer of the

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269 Pathittuppattu, (P.P.) 14, 11. 5 -7.

270 Ibid; 20; 11.2-4; 12, 1.3; 11, 11. 12-13. Valambadu Murasin Cheralatan Munnerotti Kadambaruttu.

271 Ibid; 17,1-5.

272 Ibid; 11, 11. 9-10.

273 Ibid; 14, 1.11; Ibid. 16, 1.17.

kings of the lands lying between Himalayas and Cape Comorin.[274] He destroyed the forts of his foes by setting fire to them.[275]

He had true loyal and modest noble men and took their advice sincerely.[276] He gave away gifts of elephants, horses and chariots to bards and others.[277] He also endowed many charitable institutions[278] and his gifts are not interrupted even by famine or drought.[279] He never hesitated to give gifts to poets even if they were not of the first order.[280] His rule was so benevolent that revenue was always in a constellation favourable to shower them.[281]

Imayavaramban carved the bow emblem on the Himalayas. He collected immense tributes of jewels, precious stones and a golden statue from his enemies and buried them at Mantha murram under the earth for ever.[282] He bound up the hands of the Yavanas and poured ghee on their heads and took their ornaments and precious stones.[283] He granted to his friends the villages taken from the enemies'.[284] Cheralathan who fought with Karikal Valavan at Venni was filled with shame for having "been

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274 Ibid; 11, 11. 23-25

275 Ibid; 20, 11. 19-20.

276 Ibid; 15, 11. 28-32.

277 Ibid; 20, 11. 15-17.
Pulavar Etta Onku pukal Virale
Viriuloi Mavum, Kalirum Terum
Vayiriyar Kannularkku ombattu visi

278 Ibid. 20, 1. 37.

279 Ibid., 18 11-10-12.

280 Op. cit, 20, 11. 22-23

281 Ibid; 13, 11. 25-26

282 Akam; 127, 11. 3-10.

283 PP. 11. 8-11.

284 Ibid; 1-12.

wounded and committed suicide by Vatakkiruttai. Having heard this a number of learned men did the same.[285]

Palyanai Celkelukuttuvan

Imayavaramban was suceeded by his brother Palyanai Celkelukuttuvan. He was the hero of the III decade of Pathittuppattu. He ruled the country for 25 years. Ceruppu and Aiyirai were the two hills found in his territory. Perunmalai was also another hill found within his country from which perennially the fertilising periyaru flowing.[286] Adikaman Anji of Takadur and Nannan were defeated by him. He conquered the country of the Kongars who owned plenty of cows. His country was prosperous without any mishap,[287] Imayavaramban had two sons. One of them is called Kalankaikanni Narmuti Cheral.

Kalankaikkanni Narmuti Cheral

He was the son of Cheralathan of inexhaustible wealth by Patuman Devi$_t$ the daughter of Velavikkoman. He ruled for 25 years. He was the hero of the IV decade of Pathittuppattu.

He defeated Netumital. He also defeated Nannan who rode a golden garland [288] He vanquished Nannan in the battle of Vakaippenmiurai on the west and regained his country.[289] It is also stated that he cut down the head of Nannan and his Vakai tree, with golden flowers at Peruvayil. He maintained peace in his country by destroying the power of Nannan.[290]

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285 Akam 55.

286 PP. 28, 11.9-14.

287 Ibid., 28, 11. 13-14.
Cennipucal Allatu Vemmai Aritu Nin Akam talai Nate.

288 Ibid. 32, 1.10.

289 Akam, 199, 1. 19-23.

290 P.pl. iv, 11.1-12

Katal Pirakkottiya Kuttuvan

As he took delight in Naval expeditions he acquired this name. He was the son of Neduncheralatan by Manakkilli, daughter of a Chola King. He devasted many countries between the Himalayas and Cape Comorin.[291] He invaded against Mokur, the capital of Palayanmaran took his drum, cut off his sacred margosa trees and made drums with them.[292] He defeated the allied Kings and chiefs and drove them away. He made the sea recede by throwing his weapon.[293] He conquered Viyalur, the capital of Irunko Venman, King of a mountainous country where gold mines were worked.[294] His expedition against the nine chiefs of the Chola country was successful.[295] After the death of Nalankilli, the Chola crown passed to Killivalavan, cousin of Cheran Senguttuvan. But Killi's accession was not accepted by nine of the other members of the Chola royal family princes. They also revolted against him. Senkuttuvan came to the rescue of his cousin and defeated the nine rebel princes at Nerivayil and confirmed the royal throne to Killivalavan. He also destroyed Kodukur.[296]

While the King and his company made a short visit to the hills and dales, some of the tribes appeared and narrated an episode of what they have witnessed. That was about Kannakisvisit to the Chera country and her death. The queen who accompanied Senguttuvan observed that the chaste but unfortunate Kannagi was worthy of being worshipped as a Goddess. While he decided to bring a granite from the Himalayas to carve out a statue for Kannagi the generals of the army informed the King, that the

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Ponnanan Kannip polanter
Nannan, Cultarvi Vakai Katimutal Taltikka
Tammiku maintin Narmuticcheral.

291 Ibid., 43, 11-6-10

292 Ibid., 44, 11.10-15.

293 Ibid., 45, 11. 21-22

294 Silappadikaram, XXVIII, 11. 115 ff.

295 P.P. V, 11.18-29.

296 Ibid., 1. 12.

pilgrims from the Himalayas told him that the Princes of North had sneered at the Tamil Kings. Hearing this, he defeated the Aryan rulers, Kanaka and Vijaya, cut of their tongue and brought a stone on their head after immersing it in the water of the Ganges.[297] He carved out a statue for Kannagi and a great consecration ceremony was conducted for the installation of the statue. Gajabahu I, King of Ceylon participated in this solemn function.

Atukotpattu Cheralathan

He is described in the VI Decade. He was the son of Kadunkon Neduncheralatan by the daughter of Vel Avi Koman. He ruled the country for 38 years. He was fond of Tunankai dance. His interest over Virali's dance was

297 Ibid., V. 11. 4-8.

disliked by his wife.[298] Kakkaippadiniyar says that his real interest and likeness over the songs of Virali's give room for suspicion.[299]

Celvakkadunko Valiyatan

He is the hero of the VII Decade of Pathittuppattu. He was the son of Antuvan Cheral lrumporai by Poraiyan Peruntevi. He ruled for 25 years. He ruled Porai Nadu, which includes Ponnani, Palaikkatu, Vainatu, Valluvanatu, Kurumbar Natu, Koyikkotu and Ernatu. He besieged the city belonged to Vanavasi and won victory. He brought a large amount of booty.[300]

Peruncheral Irumporai

The VIII Decade of Patirruppattu narrates his achievements. He was the son of Atan. He defeated Kaluvul, the chief of the shepherds and devastated his capital.[301] He was the Lord of Kol and Airai.[302] He destroyed Takadur.[303] He performed many sacrifices, observing all rules strictly. Farmers lived happily in his country. They found gems after rain when they were engaged in ploughing.[304] He was very helpful to Pulaiyar.[305] His army consisted of many elephants which looked like Konkars herds of cattle.

Peruncheral was renowned for his conquest of Takadur, the capital of Adikaiman Chieftain. The contemporary of Adikaiman was Elini. The expedition of Takadur is described in an epic called Takaduryattirai. The whole work is not available. The Epic

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298 Ibid., 52, 11 14-24.

299 Ibid., 51.

300 Ibid., 63, 11. 11-12.

301 Ibid., 71, 1. 17.

302 Ibid., 1, 14.

303 Ibid., 78, 1.9.

304 Ibid., 76, 11. 14-15.

305 Ibid., 73, 1.9.

was composed by Arisilkilar, Ponmudiyar and others. According to K.A.N.Sastri, the Epic was a later composition.

Peruncheral lrumporai subdued a cowherd chieftain called Kaluvul and captured his fortress. At last, He renounced his worldly life and became an ascetic.

Kutakko Ham Cheral Irumporai

He was the son of Perum Ceral lrumporai. He defeated the Chola and the Pandya Kings. He also defeated the ruler of Vicci and other chieftains and captured Vicci and its surroundings. He instituted the worship of Satukka Butam in the city of Vanchi. He was praised by his court poet perum Kunrurkilar. Other Chera Kings are identified from the Purananuru, Akananuru, Nattrinai and other Sangam literatures.

Perunkadunko

He was a great poet and ruled the Chera country Vanchi as its capital.

Yanaikkatcey mantaran Cherai lrumporai

He ruled the Chera country with Tondi as his capital. He was defeated and captured by Neduncezhiyan in the battle of Talaiyanankanam. He was also captured and imprisoned by him, but Irumporai escaped from the prison to save his country and to avoid the great deterioration. He was also defeated by Perunarkilli who was accompanied by Malaiyaman Tirumudikkari. Kudalur Kilar, Poruntil Ilankiranar and Kurunkoliyur Kilar were sung in praise of Irumporai.

Mariveoko

He was the contemporary ruler of Ukkirapperuvaluti Pandya and Irasasuyam Vetta Perunarkilli. Chola Poetess, Avvaiyar praised his friendly nature with two other rulers. She also said, "If you three continue to rule in a friendly way, you could rule the world, if you find any drift, everything will be spoiled."

Marutham Padiya Ilankadunko

He has sung a song in which he narrates about the battle of Paruvur. In his poem Hankatunko mentions that he tasted defeat from the hands of the Chola ruler.[306]

Kokkotai Marpan

The poems of Poykaiyar throw light on the prosperity of his country.[307] The news of Paliayan Marpan's (the Chief of the Pandya King) defeat in the hands of Chola ruler Killi Valavan reached the ears of Kokkotaimarpan and he was much pleased.[308]

Kanaikkal Irumporai

The life history of Kanaikkal Irumporai is the best example to pose the glory of the Tamils. Kanaikkal Irumporai defeated Muvan and pulled out his teeth and inserted them on the gates of the fort at Tondi, his capital. Poykaiyar mentions this in a poem found in Nattrinai. The battle at Tirupporpurain witnessed the defeat of Kanaikkal Irumporai in the hands of the Cbola King, Senganan. Irumporai was imprisoned in a prison at Kutavayirkottam, but he died in the prison while a servant of the prison delayed to supply water, which he wanted to quench his thirst.

Nomenclature

Imayavaramban Cheralatan

He is called Cheralatan and once Neduncheralatan. He is also called Imayavaramban Neduncheralatan. Imayavaramban means, one who has Himalayas as the boundary of his realm. In the third decade of Patirriuppattu he is called Arattiruvil (of exhaustible wealth) Cheralatan. In IV decade, he is called Kudavarkoman Neduncheralatan. In the V decade, kutakko Netum Cheralatan.

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[306] Akam-96

[307] Puram-48 and 49.

[308] Akam-346.

The poems of Akananuru (55-127, 347 and 396) call him Cheralatan and 62 of puram refers to him as Kudakko Neduncheralatan.

Palayanai Celkelu Kuttuvan

He is called Kuttuvan twice (pp. 22, 1. 27 ; 23, 1. 10) and Perumpalayanai Kuttuvan once (29,1.14). He is popularly called Palayanai Celkelu kuttuvan.which refers to the roaming of herds of elephants country in his like clouds.[309]

Kalankaykkanni Narmuticcheral

He is called Narmudiccheral and Kalankaykanni Narmudic-cheral (38, 1. 4). Being crowned in a desert he was crowned with a crown of palmyra fibre (Nar) and wore a garland of Kalamkay, a wild fruit. He is also called Vanavaramban.[310]

Katal Pirakkottiya Kuttuvan

He is called Kuttuvan in 5 places in Pathittuppattu. He is also entitled Katal Pirakkottiya Kuttuvan as he crossed the sea with many ships on many times and got victory. He is different from Senguttuvan of Silappadikaram.

Atukotpattu Ceralathan

This King was fond of Tunangai dance (pp. VI St. 56 11.7-8) hence his name. The King traced out the sheep of men who lost them in Dandaka forests and returned them at Tondi, his capital (pp. VI, 11. 3-4). The author of Patikam interprets Ater in the name Atukotpattu Cheralatan and sings as Kotpatta Varudaiya (Varutai means sheep). The meaning is interpretted by some scholars differently. The expression is made as

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[309] P.P. 39-11.17-18.
Sirmiku muttam Taiyiya
Narmuticceral Ninpor nilal pukanre

[310] Ibid., 38, 1. 12.
Vasali il Celval Vanavaramba.

Kotpattavar and Udaiyai, which refers clothes and not sheep according to some scholars. But it does not refer either clothes or sheep but the text proper often refers to his fondness of dancing i.e. Adal. The author of the Patikam had added the word Dandaranyam to warrant his interpretatian and invented a story accordingly. He is called Adukotpattu Cheralathan (VI, 8, 11) and Vanavaramban (VI, St. 6).

Selvakkatunko Valiyatan

The title was referred to after his richness. He may be identified with Poy-il (ever true) Selvakkktunko, father of Perunceral Irumporai He is also called Selvakko (VII, 63, 1.16) Selvakkonan (St. 67, 1.23)Valiyatan Ceralatan in Purananuru[43]

Puruncheral Irumporai

He is the hero of Takadur Yattlrai, where in he is eulogised by Ponmudiyar. He is called Irumporai by puram 50. He is called Poraiyan and Kotaimarpan (St. 73, 1,14)

Ilamkadunko, who is related to Perunkadunko was the author of two poems of Akananuru (96 and 176). He is not only narrating the incidents but also giving a beautiful historical sources about the battle of Paruvur, a place identified with Travancore. He refers to the fact of the defeat of Chera and Pandya Kings at hands of a Chola ruler, whose name is not specifically mentioned.

Ilanko Adikal who renounced his Kingship in favour of his brother Senguttuvan, was the author of the famous Epic Silappathikaram.

Perunkadunko, who is prefixed Palaipadiya, gives a beautiful description of deserts. In his poem Puram 282, he refers to a heroic warrior. He says, "Do you know where now the true knight of noble deeds live? He lives in the mouths of poets whose

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[43] Ibid., 56, 11 7-8.
Ventu meymaranta Valcci
Vintu uku porkkalattu Atumkove

trained tongues pour forth sweet verses; though his body indeed has been severed from life". From another poem of the same King it is noticed that the Malava tribes were condemned (Akam-337) by the King.

Perunkadunko again describes, If a stay in a strange place without you, let me pass many days without anybody seeking my charity". It is narrated by the King through the words of the hero in Kuruntogai.[44] Another description of the King Nannan of Konkanan is found from Nattrinai (202) where he compares, Konku flowers to the festive lamps of Tirukkartikai. He compares the joy of the hero in meeting the heroine to that of one who meets in flesh and blood his own tutelory deity. Besides these songs, he had sung Palaikkali in Kalittogai, ten songs in Nattrinai, ten songs in Kuruntogai and eleven songs in Akananuru.

Mutakkirunta Cheralathan, otherwise called Mutankkitanta Neduncheralathan is the author of a poem in Akananuru (30) where he speaks the love of the heroine through her friends. While narrating her love, he gives a beautiful description of the Neithal people.

Cheraman Nambi Kuttuvan, though is not found anything about him through historical sources, his interest towards composing songs can be noticed from the following poems 145, 236 and 345 of Nattrinai; 109 and 243 of Kuruntokai. The hero promised to come earlier through his letter when the friend of the heroine met the hero, the separation of love is described in the poem Nattrinai 345.

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[44] Kurutogai-137
Meliyal Arivail Ninnal Akam pulampa
Nirturantu Ammaikuven Ayin-Eruturantu
Iravalar Varavaikal
Pala Akute - Yancelavurtakave

Jlamkatunko succeeds Perunkatunka. Two songs of him are found in Akananuru and two in Nattrinai. Cheraman Makkotai, who is also called Kullambalattu Tunciya Cheraman Makkotai gives a pathetic and philosophical description of his affection towards his wife, whose death brings this songs.[45]

In another poem 168 of Akam, he refers to the spacious kitchen hall of Utiyan Cherai. Karuvur Cheran Sattan is the author of the poem 268 of Kuruntogai. Cheraman Ham Kuttuvan is the author of the poem 153 of Akananuru. Cheraman Entai has composed the poem 22 of Kuruntokai. Cheraman Kanaikkal Irumporai expressed his feelings in a poem 74 of puram when he was in prison.[46]

The Chera Kings And The Tamil Poets

The generosity and valour of the Kings are described by the poets in many places. For instance, when Selvakkatunko Valiyatan asked Kapilar the cause for the smoothness of latter's hand Kapiiar replied (VII, 14) "Your hands are employed unlike ours, in rough work such as handling weapons of war, goading the elephants, grasping the bndle reins,stringing the bow and present ting ornaments to poets, while ours are employed in the pleasant task of consuming plenty of meat and food given by your grace.

Selvakkadunkon gave to poets out of magnititude of his heart without minding their unworthiness to receive such gifts. He granted to his poet Kapilar a lakh of Kanam and all the lands which he could see from the top of the hill, called Nanra. The same hill may be identified with Nana, otherwise called Bhavani.

Perunceral Irumporai, another Chera King got out of his palace with his wife and told his poet Aricil-kilar to take every thing inside the palace. He also offered the

[45] Puram-245.

[46] Puram-74.

crown, with nine lakh Kanam to the poet, but the poet declined the offer and accepted the ministership.

The poet Mocikiranar unwittingly got upon the sacred cot on which the drum used to be placed and worshipped when the drum had been removed for the ceremonial bathing. Without doing any harm to the poet for this sacrilege, the King fanned him with Camarams till the poet woke up from sleep (VIII, 50)

Narmuticcheral, gave his poet Kappiarrukkappiyanar 40 lakhs of Pon and a portion of his revenue. Katal Pirakkottiya Kuttuvan endowed the revenue of Umbarankkatu and is son Kuttuvan Cheras to his poet Paranar.

Imayavarmban Netumcheralatan assigned 500 villages in Umbarakkadu and a portion of the revenue from Tennatu (South Travancore) for 38 years Kumattur Kannanar who song in his praise.

Palyanai Celkelukuttuvan never failed to patronise bards by gifts of ornaments even in times of drought (pp. St. 23, 11. 3-10).[47]

It is stated that his palace, kitchens and Yagasalas were ever smoking in the preparation of food and havis for his guests and Devas (pp .St. 21 pp. 5-14).

The Chera Kings and the Battle Field

The Chera Kings, achievements in the battle field were described earlier. The Chera rulers themselves marched into the battle field and rode either on the elephant or on the horseback. The presence of the King or the prince was essential. This kind of the presence of the king would naturally to encourage the soldiers. While besieging the forts, the Kings also would stay months together along with the soldiers. The poetess Avvaiyar has sung a poem[48] in which she describes the blood thirsty nature of the Kings Nedun Cheral Atan and Peru Virar Killi both of them died in the battle field. "The elephants became disabled as they were pierced by arrows. The splendid chargers are all killed with their brave riders. The commanders who drow in their chariots were slaughtered ruthlessly and their faces were covered with their own shields. The drummers were also killed and their big thundering drums are found on the ground. Both the contending Kings have fallen on the battle field, their perfumed breasts pierced by long lances. Alas! What will become of their fertile countries, in the cool rivers of which peasant girls decked with bracelets made of lily stalks, leap and sport.

Announcement of War

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47 Puram 6 – 8.
48 Puram-63.

Royal sword and umbrella were adorned with garlands of flowers and were carried on the chief elephant in royal state to a fort outside the town. When Senguttuvan announced his decision to march against North, he ordered that the royal sword and Umbrella should be carried north-wards adorned with flowers. The big drums thundered, the banners fluttered and the five corporations and the eight great assemblies, the priests and astrologers, the judges and ministers all exclaimed, "Blessed be the King." The King also used to give a great feast. Senguttuvan feasted the generals and chiefs of his army before his march.

Before mounting on the elephants back, the King used to go to temple. Senguttuvan went to the Vishnu temple before he marched to north. Selvakkadunko Valiyatan was famous for his army. The trained and well disciplined army of him is described in the 69th verse of Pathittuppattu.

If the king or any soldier received wounding or a slight scratch on his back, they won't come back to their native place. Cheralatan got wounded on his back and ashamed of the same, the King died by observing starvation, a religious rite. Karikalan got victory in the battle field, but a poetess eulogised more the Chera ruler for his heroic action than the victorious Chola ruler.[49]

Village Nomenclature

Some references can be cited for how the Chera Kings honoured the poets by creating villages in their names. Nachellaiyar, a poetess who lived the down part of Porainadu, had sung a beautiful song which brought a great glory and she was honoured as Kakkaippadini. From that day onwards, she was called Kakkaipadiniyar Narchellaiyar. The King in order to honour the poetess changed the name of the village after her

[49] Ibid.66.
Nininum Nallan Anre
Purappun Nani vatakkiruntone.

name as Kakkaiyur. The village is found near Palkot.[50] Senguttuvan honoured Sattanar and Ilanko Adikal and created villages after the names Satianur and Ilankovur. This can be attested from the works of Ptolemy.[51]

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[50] Duraiswamy Pillai, Avvai, S., Ceramannar Varalaru, Tuticorin, 1968, p.170.

[51] Mac Crindle's Translation, Ptolemy, p. 54.

King's Court

The King's court was decorated by the high priest, the chief astrologer, the great ministers of state and the generals and gallant officers of the army. They must be present before the arrival of the King. He may also be accompanied by his queen. When the King entered into the court, the learned scholars and others would exclaim, 'Long live King of Kings'.

Astrology

When the generals of the army informed the King that the Aryan rulers of the North Sneered at the Tamil Kings, Senguttuvan got angry and alerted his army to march against Himalayas. But before his march, he consulted the chief astrologer, who was learned in that science, which treats of the twelve signs of the Zodiac and the position of the planets and stars and the five parts of Astrology. He rightly observed and told the King, "Mighty monarch, may victory ever attend thee. This is the auspicious time, if thou art pleased to start at once in the direction that thou wishest to proceed all thy rival Kings shall bow at thy sacred feet".[52]

Kings would also consult the astrologers to know who will succeed him and gave training for kingship to his son. For instance, an astrologer appeared in the royal court of Imayavaramban and predicted that Ilanko, the younger brother of Senguttuvan, would become the ruler of the Chera country. But Ilanko magnanimously renounced his wordly life in favour of his brother Kuttuvan and disproved the predictions of the astrologer.

The Chera Kings performed many religious religious sacrifices, Senguttuvan had belief in the transmigration of souls. When the chief priest advised him to perform a magnificent sacrifice, called Rajasuya, so that his soul may be blessed in its future births,

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[52] Kanakasabhai V., Op.cit., p. 95.

the King ordered to perform a Rajasuya on a grand scale and for the consecration of a temple to Kannaki.

Selvakkadunko performed many Religious sacrifices.

The glory of the Chera Kings are valued not by their expeditions to Himalayas and their conquests over the Aryans but by their self-respect and generosity. Unable to bear the disgrace of having received a wound on the back while fighting, one Chera King determined to put an end to his life by starvation. Another King died in prison ashamed of the disrespect by shown a servant of the jail who brought water late in a cup to quench his thirst.

As Kapilar gracefully complimented the King Selvakkadunko Valyatan, the Chera Kings were terror to their foes; King towards their subjects, liberal-towards the poets, strict to their ministers and blood thirsty in the battlefield and blood stained through victory. In short, the Kings were acclaimed superier to the luminary.

The Chola Kings of the Sangam Age Tolkappiyam, the oldest evidence in Tamil, mentioning the three imperial races of Tamil Nadu from the very beginning as Vanpukal Muvar Tanpolil Varaippu[53] Pontai Vempe Arena Varuum Maperun tanayar[54]

These Kings are the natives of the land from the time of its inception; became Kings gradually. The second quotation cited above shows the symbolic garlands of these races as :

Palmyra flower garland	-	Cheran
Atti flower garland	-	Cholan
Margosa flower garland	-	Pandyan.

Like wise the emblems fo them are as :

53 Tol. Porul. Sey.., 75.
54 Tol. Porul. Puram. 5.

Bow	-	Cheran.
Tiger (Panthera Pardus)	-	Cholan.
fish	-	Pandyan.

The symbol Panthera Pardus is having close relationship with the life of the then Cholas. It is obvious that the Chola country has no hills and forests, but thick bushes and waste lands. Such bushes are the natural abodes of this kind of Cheetah called by the Zoologists as Panthera Pardus, colloquially called as Perunchiruttai, which has the dots all over its body in small corona forms.[55] Panthers are of running long distances to capture its prey.Perhaps of its running capacity and of valour it may be named as Patlnarati Venkai (Tiger of Sixteen feet). As an appreciation of its valour and nativity it might have been taken as an emblem or symbol of the Chola race.

The Chola dynasty hails that the Kings of this dynasty were the descendants of the sun, i. e., they belong to the solar race. Cholar Kuliyinar Suriya Kitlatiinar[56] is the observation of the Commentator of Yapperunkalam.

The very concept itself shows the antiquity and close relationship of the Cholas with the nature. Considering this idea Parimelalagar, the commentator of Tirukkural expresses that the "Cholas are of the ancient race who had their origin at the time of creation of this world.[57]

Tolkappiyam depicts the qualities of the Tamil language and the culture of the Tamils in the form of Cuttirams which appears to have composed 3000 years ago so it is

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[55] Karanthai Plates. Emblem.

[56] Yapparunkal Viruthy P. 229.

[57] Thirukkural. pari. 96 : 5.

obvious that the significant features of Tamil language and culture expressed by Tolkappiyam would have been anterior to Tolkappiyar,

Among the Tamil Kings of those days, Cheras were noted for their valour. There was a tradition that the territory of the Cheras ranged from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin.[58] Ancient Tamil Kings were highly ambitious. They wanted to extend their territory up to Himalayas. They expressed this ardent iove by engraving their emblems like the Bow, Tiger, fish on the Himalayas.

When the Chola country had its boundaries between Venkatam Hills in north, Vellaru in the south, Kattaikarai of Karuvur in west and the Bay of Bengal in the east ruled by llamperum Chenni. A newly rising race in Andhra area named Vadukar made many attacks on the Cholas. To check their attacks on northern frontier llamperum Chenni fought against Vadukas at a place called Pali and destructed them.[59] The words of Vampa Vadukar reveal this message as an evidence.

Accoring to Purananuru, it is being known that the Cholas had enemity with the Pandyan and Paratavars in Souths, Cheras in the north west near Karuvur. Since the Cholas were having enemies all over their frontiers they have to improve their military strength both in land and sea. The maritime enterprises and the royal navy of Karikalan are the evidences of the above fact. In addition to this, the Cholas of the Sangam Age had the cavalry and elephants in considerable number.

The facts which we have noticed earlier will be of immense help to us to trace the history of the Cholas in the following lines.

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[58] Puram, 17.

[59] Puram, 33, 66, 378, 385

Tentative Classification

According to the evidences relating to the Saugara period, it has been classified in to three parts.[60] They are,

B.C.	4th – 3rd	Centuries	Earlyier period
B.C.	3rd – 2nd	Centuries	Middle period
B.C.	2nd – 1st.	Centuries	Later period

But the Chera aod Chola Kings mentioned in our ancient literature like 'Purananuru', 'Akananuru' and 'Pathittuppattu' were seemed to have lived from 5th Century B- C. to 2nd Century A. D. The Cholas, who lived within this time scale are known as the Cholas of the Sangam Age.

60 Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions p. 2.

Surnames of the Cholas

Surnames of the Cholas mentioned in our literature are valuable data for this study. 'Purananuru' mentions Seventeen Cholas. Among the seventeen, Ten kings were having the surnames Killi, Three had Chenni, one Valavan and one Colan. The poets who composed poems on these Kings point out their greatness, pedigree, territory, death place and their glorious deeds in a picturesque way.

According to the evidences from the 'Purananuru' and 'Akananuru' the Cholas who lived in Sangam age can be listed in the following manner; Chempiyan, Killivalavan, Nalan killi, Cholan, Netunkilli, Ilavantikai Pallitungiya, Nalankilli, Raja suyam Velta Perunar Killi, Kurappalli tunjiya Killivalavan, Kulamurrattut tunjiya Killivalavan, Koppenmar killi, Mutittalai koppenmarkilli, Verapalattatakkai Peruvirar killi, Uruvappalter llancheichenni, Ceruppali erinta Ilanchet Cenni, Ilancet Cenni, Karikal Peruvalattan, Kurappalli tunjiya Peruntiruma Valavan, Mavalattan the Brother of Nalankilli, Kopperuncholan, Koccenganan

From a study of the surnames of the Chola Kings, we are inclined to think that there were three families or lines of the Chola Kings during the Sangam Age. They were the Chempiyan, Killi and Chenni. They all belong to the Solar race as they have called themselves. Though the names of the prominent Choias are mentioned in the ancient Tamil literature Kings like Sibi and Manu were treated as the originators of the Chola dynasty. The Killis and their descendant Valavans were mentioned mostly as the successors of Sibi. Likewise Cempiyans and Choias were mentioned as the descendant of Manu. Chempiyar, the oldest clan of the Chola race, appears to have come into prominence, gradually the sudden rise than that of the KW. is and Chennis.

Among the defeated Kings by some Pandyan Celiyao, a Chempiyan King also mentioned along with Titiyan, Elini and Erumaiyuran.[61] There is no available sources to establish whether the Chempiar were continued their reign as emperors. Killis and Cennis ruled with the surnames Valavar and Cholar respectively. It is learnt that the descendants of Valavar and Cholar were constituted only by the matrimonial links with Chempiyar. Hence, some works of later period occasionally mention Chola Kings of Killi and Chenni tradition as Chempiar too.[62] Uraiyur was the Capital of the Killi's. In the later period Kaveripoompattinam became the seaport and as well as the second capital of the Cholas. It can be presumed that when the King was ruling at the capita! Uraiyur, the successor (like an younger brother or son) would have ruled the second capital such as Kaveripoompattinam. A detailed study of the Sangam literary works show that the very surnames themselves express that some of the Kings who ruled Uraiyur, and those who ruled from Kaveripoompattinam. Though the surnames were serially given with the Chola names, we have not any clear evidence to prove, that who was the King and who was the Prince of that time; their relationships and their regnal years.

The Prefixes and Suffixes

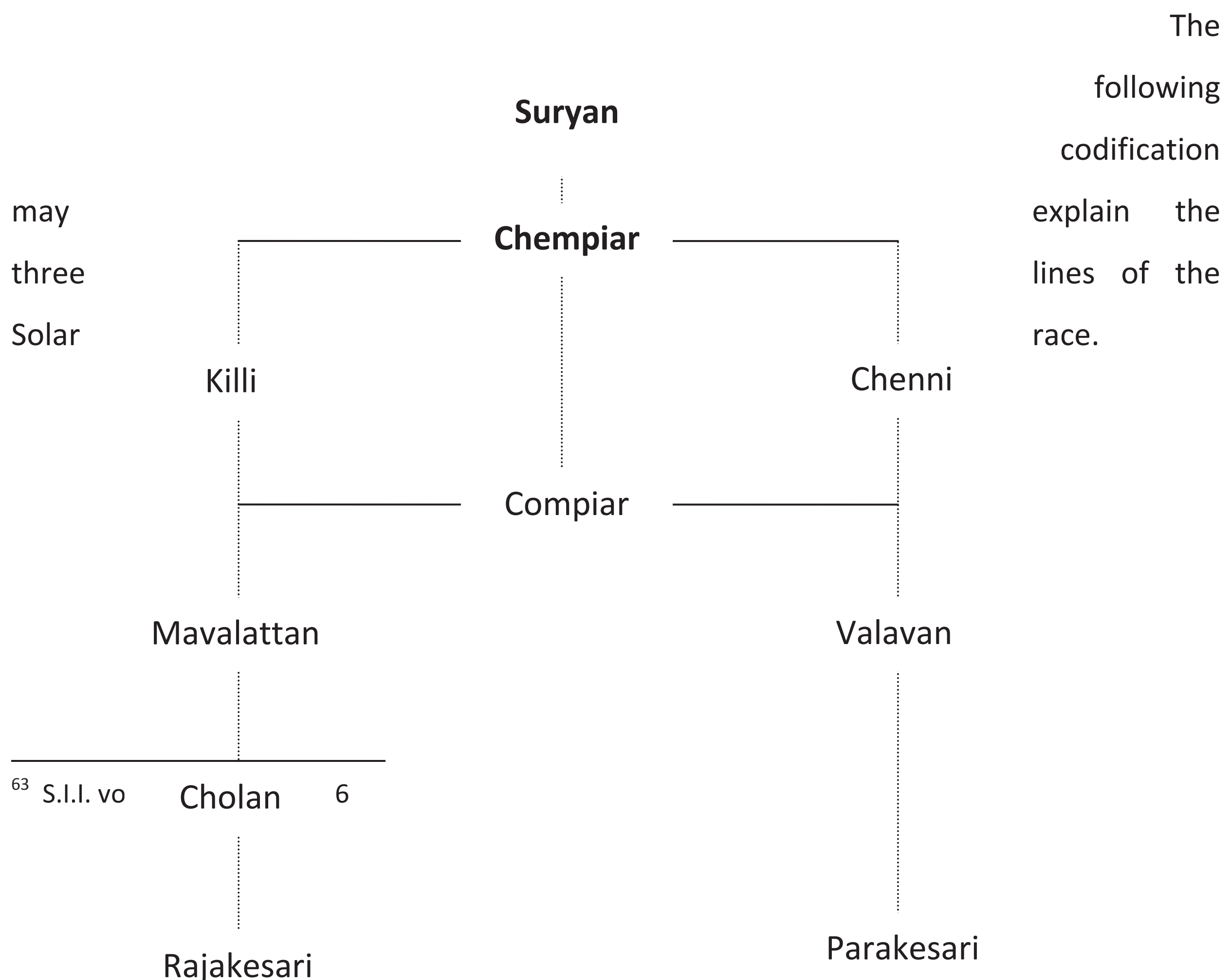
The prefixes like Periya and llaya reveal that the Kings with Peru like Perunarkilli. Penmtiruma Valavan, Peruncholan ruled from Uraiyur, whereas the Kings with llaya like Itanchet Chenni, Mavalattan ruled from Kaveripoompattinam. So that, we can assess the role placed by the Killis as the kings, ruled the country from Uraiyur were mainly dealing with the administration and the defence of the kingdom, while the Chennis as the Princes, ruling from Kaveripoompattinam were mainly dealing with the foreign affairs and the foreign trade. They have also protected the portal towns and in possession of a strong naval force.

61 Akam., 36.
62 Puram, 10.

Thus, the Cholas of the Sangam Age were able to improve the wealth of their territory by an efficient administration on one hand and by a sound economy on the other. It is apparent that the Princes of the Chenni family, when they became Kings, have affixed the surnames like Thiru, Nalam, Ma, etc., as prefixes and suffixes with their names. There are evidences like Narkilli, Nalamkilli and Ma valattan etc., Though the three lines of the Cholas were originated from the single race, only two of these families namely Killi and Cenni used to dominate the political arena of the Sangam Age Cempiyars, the main axis of the sun race had links with these two groups. Sometimes they have been ruling powers. Mostly Chempiyars appear to be the feeders or supporters to the growth of the other two lines. Inscriptions inform us that this Chempiyars became chieftains in Sangam period and Government officials in Pallava period.[63]

The Three Lines

The following codification may explain the three lines of the Solar race.



[63] S.I.I. vo 6

Geneology

Evidences about this origination were explained in the epigraphs and literatures of the later Cholas. They are Anpil Plates of Parantaka II, Larger Leiden Plates of Rajaraja I, Thiruvalankadu Plates of Rajendra Chola I, Karanthai Plates of Rajendra Chola I, Sarala Plates of Vira Rajendra Chola, Kanyakumari Inscription of Vira Rajendra Chola, Kalingattupparani, Kulottunga Cholan Ula, Vikrama Cholan Ula, Rajaraja Cholan Ula, etc.

According to the version of Ottakuttan in his 'Ula'sthe following list of the Cholas of the Sangam Age is given : Thintmal, Brahman, Kasipan, Marici, Suryan, Manu, Mant at a Musukuntan, Killivalavan, Suraguru, Thungelyil erinta totittot Cempiyan, Samutrajit, Suratiita Cholan, Sibi, Sivugan (Kaveran, Sitmratan), Karikalan, Koccenkat Cholan

When we compare these Cholas of the Ulas with the Cholas mentioned in Sangam literature this will appear as a list of legendary rulers. But Karanthai Plates give a helpful hand to us. According to this Grant, the Geneology of Cholas is given as:[64] Sun, Mann, Ichuvaku, Man tat a Musukuntan, Sibi, Cholan, Rajakesari, Parakesari, Suraguru, Uparisaravasa, Karikalan.

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[64] Karanthai Plates Euology.

When we compare the list of Chola Kings mentioned in Vikrama Cholan Ula and Karanthai Copper Plate grant, we find that the names are in different chronological order. In the Ulas, Tirumal is mentioned as the originator of the Chola race. Successively Brahman, Kasipan, Marici are mentioned. Only after this four 'Sun[65] is mentioned. But, some early epigraphs mention Sun' as the originator. This difference in the Ula of Ottakkuttan exposes, the intruding factors in the geneological table of the Cholas. But the observation of the epigraph that the Sun as the progenitor of the Chola family is acceptable by its affinities with the mankind Both in literature and in epigraphs though Manu, Mantata and Musukuntan are mentioned after 'Sun', Karanthai Plates denote Ichuvaku as the successor of Sun[13] Generally it is said that the Cholas were following the traditional lanes of Manu which constituted by the emperor Manu himself for the well being of mankind. Placing Manu after 'Sun' is seemed to be right by this fact. Thus Sun as appears as the progenitor and Manu as the originator of the Chola family. Next famous King was Sibi. He was placed in the sixth place by the epigraphs and fourteenth by the literature like Ula. Though there is difference in the order, the facts about Sibi are identical. Such difference in the order of placing Sun to Vijayalaya may be cleared by a close study of the geneological list given by epigraphy and literature. Following Sibi, a King named Cholan is mentioned. Karanthai Plates narrates him with new historical flashes as: "Cholan emerged in the Sun race, as a full moon to the Sea. Only after him the Kings of this race were named as Cholas.''[66] From these lines, we come to know the new historical fact that the very name Cholan was once proper name of a King and afterwards it has gradually turned into a surname. After Cholan, his son Rajakesari succeeded. Rajakesari was succeeded by his son Parakesari. Both of them were famous emperors. The successors of these Kings prefixed with their

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[65] Karanthai Plates Euology 3.

[66] Karanthai Plates Euology 7.

name these Kings' names alternatively. Karanthai Plates explain this fact as: "After them the names of Rajakesari and Parakesari became the surnames of the successors alternatively.[67] We have evidences for this fact only from the rule of Vijayalaya onwards. There is hardly any reference to this in the sur names of the Chola Kings of the Sangam Age. The three Ulas do not mention Cholan, Rajakesari, and Parakesari. But Kalingathupparani, the main source for these Ulas explains the King named Suratirajan who established the race name Cholan and the succession of Rajakesari and Parakesari, and the tradition of having the Tiger as the emblem of this royal dynasty.[68]

From this information, it is observed that the three lines of the Sun race namely Chempiatii, Killi and Chenni have become the 'Chola' family after the rule of the emperor known as Cholan. Among such Kings, Rajakesari and Parakesari would have had initially the emblem of Tiger, their names afterwards become the surnames of the alternate Kings. It is not easy to identify this Cholan, Rajakesari and Parakesari with the data available in the Sangam literatures. Suratittan, the thirteenth member mentioned in the .Ula is seemed to be identical with the Cholan mentioned by Akananuru.[11] The first King who had the surname Cholan in the Sangam literature is Kopperum Cholan. The Valavans like KarikarperuValavan., PenmtirumaValavan and Mavalattan are noteworthy. Karikarperuvalattan mentioned in the sixteenth place of the Ula's list of Chola Kings and twelfth in the epigraphs. But in Pattinappalai and Porunarattuppadai, this monarch finds a supreme place.[69] Some researchers have opinion that Karikalan and Thiru-mavalavan are not one and the same person. They were two different personalities lived in different times say as 1st century B.C. and 2nd Century. A. D. respectively. Anyhow there are no definite clues, to identify the Karikalan who raised the embankments of Kaveri with Thirumavalavan, who ruled over Kaverippampattinam.

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[67] Karanthai Plates Euology 9.

[68] Kalinga. Raja. 14.

[69] Akam. 60, 93.

It is definite, that Kings like Karikarperuvalattan, Kurappalli tunjiya peruntirumavalavan, and Mavalattan are the ancestors of Kocchenkat Cholan. In a glance, we can see the continuation of the Cholas as :

Suryan, Cholan, Chempian, Rajakesari, Killi and Chenni Parakesari, The Geneology may expose the line of Kings as :

Manu, Cholan, Mantala, Mavalattan, Sibi, Kopperuncholan and so on.

When we accept Suryan or Manu as the progenitor of the Cholas royal family, we may be able to decide that Koscenganan was the last of the Sangam Cholas, followed by Nalladi. During his period, the Cholas reign would have declined. Kocchenganan is mentioned in Purananuru, As a donor, he built Seventy two storeyed temples for Siva. This information is acknowledged by the religious literature like Devaram Tivyaprabandham[70] and Periyapuranam. Akananuru mentions Nalladi as the suceessor of the Cholas (Cholar Marugan).[71]

The Capitals of the Cholas

Among the capitals of the Cholas mentioned in the Sangam literature, Uraiyur appears as the ancient one fortified with strong moats etc. in

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[70] The Hero of these two works were mentioned as Karikalan. The authors are different.

[71] Akam. 356.

Pattinappalai and Silappathikaram, the portal town Kaverippumpattinam has been glorified[72]

Meanwhile, Purananuru states that Avur, a town between Uraiyur and Kaverippumpattinam was also strongly fortified and the treasures of the Cholas were hidden at Kudavasal, a place very near to Avur.

Capitals

Since Manu is included in the list of the Cholas, as the originator his capital Arur should also be treated as capital of the Cholas.[73] These strong capitals of those Cholas might have declined and diminished in their importance during the period of the last Sangam. So it was inevitable to find a new capital with more strength and defensive environments,during 2nd and 3rd Centuries A. D. Such a new capital was found at a different landscape. Although the earlier capitals Uraiyur, Kaverippumpattinam and Arur were having strong fortification, which could not be defeated by the enemies and they were all situated on the banks of the Kaveri and its branches. Though the Chola Kings were able to save the capitals from their enemies by their valour, they were unable to prevent the destruction of these towns from the natural calamities like the floods of Kaveri. In order to save the capital and prevent the natural calamity, Karikalan, the great raised the embankments of Kaveri near Uraiyur which had been recorded in the epigraphs and literature.[74] Uraiyur and other towns excluding Kaverippoompattinam have become prey several times to the fury of the floods of Kaveri while Kaverippumpattinam, the sea port of the Cholas was destroyed by both the sea and the river Kaveri.[75] So the Chola Kings of those days were in need of a capital town which would not become an easy prey to the natural calamities and at the

72 Akam - 356

73 Peria Puranam - Nakaraccirappu

74 Kalingathupparani - Rajaparampariyam

75 Mani. Patikam

same time it should have natural fortifications. Besides this they were looking for a central place in their kingdom. Kocchenkat Cholan who constructed 72 temples of Siva on the banks of Kaveri might have witnessed the destruction of his own constructions by the floods. So, he constructed temples on strong raised plinth platforms of stones, so as to resist the floods.[76] But he did not take any preventive steps to safeguard those towns from the fury of floods. His successor Nalladi with his father's bitter experience, of the floods of Kaveri found a suitable place for his stronghold as a capital between Uraiyur and Kaverippoompattinam and in the middle of his country near Thanjavur. This is a plateau rarely seen in Kaveri delta, which might have satisfied his expectations for the establishment of a new capital. He has planned well, and constructed the new capital there, with a strong fort on the hard soil of that place which had no troubles from Kaveri and its branches and also from the sea. Since the soil was hard enough, that place was called as Valman" (The hard soil) which in later times has been called as Vallam. Akananuru mentions this truth as; Nalladi was ruling over Chola country from Vallam, a well fortified capital town constructed by him. According to the versions of Akananuru, Vallam Kilavon Nalladi.[77] Nalladi would have ruled Chola country consisting of a small area. His date of ruling may be fixed in the 3rd century, A. D. After him this capital might have been captured by the invaders like Kalabhras and Mutharaiyas. Thus, the Chola royal family which traced its origin with the sun, continuosly ruled for five centuries gloriously up to the days of Nalladi, the successor of Kocchenganan, the last illustrious ruler of this dynasty. This Nalladi may be the last Chola ruler of the Sangam Age who can be considered as the progenitor of the Later Chola dynasty of the Vijayalaya line. Vallam, the capital town of the Cholas founded by Nalladi was in flourishing condition until the rule of Nayak Kings of Thanjavur, like Vijayaraghava

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[76] Tiruvai Mozhi – Peria thiru Mozhi

[77] Akam. 336, 356.

Nayakkar[78] Later on, the fort and the moat might have been destroyed. Now we find only a few mounds. Yet the remaining portions of the walls of the fort, moat and the mounds tell us the heroic episodes of the warriors and give some glimpses of the grandeur of the Chola royal family of the Sangam Age.

The Pandya Kings of the Sangam Age

The Pandyas were the founders of Sangam or Kudal and patronised it from time immemorial. They were the traditional rulers of Pandyan Kingdom from early times and ruled upto the 14th century A.D., with all glory and splendour and continued to rule as subordinates till the 17th century A.D.

Kingdom of the Pandyas

The Pandya Kingdom, watered by the rivers Vaigai and Tamraparanai comprised the modern Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari. The river Vaigai has been immortalised not only in Puranas but also glorified in Paripadal as Vaigai. The river Tamraparani, mentioned in Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa, did not find in a place by this name in the Sangam Literature. It was known as Tan Porunai. As this is fed by both south western monsoons and the north eastern monsoons, it is in full spate twice a year and enriches the plains of Tirunelveli.Though there is no definite reference about Tirunelveli, Korkai at the mouth of the Tamraparan was the capital of Pandyas. After the destruction of Then Madurai and Kapadapuram, the then Pandyas shifted to the present Madurai. V. Kanakasabhai is of the opinion that this Madurai is called after the sacred city of Muttra, on the bank of the Yamuna.[79] There are number of hypotheses relating to the antiquity of the Pandyas.

Legendary Origin of the Chera, Chola and Pandyas

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[78] Nayak Rulers of Tanjore, p.148.
[79] Kanakasabhai, V., Op.cit., P. 12.

It seems that these three were brothers who at first lived and ruled in common at Korkai and then they were separated, Pandyan remained at home and Cheras and Cholas went forth to seek their fortune elswhere.[80]

Derivation of the term Pandya

R. Caldwell derives Pandya from the Sanskrit Pandu, the name of the father of five Pandavas of Mahabharata.[81] The word Pandya has been derived by some scholars from Pandiyam (meaning toil, service) and so refers to the Pandyas, the men of action.[82] The Pandyas are also known as Meenavar, Kauvuriyar, Panchavar, Tennan, Celiyan, Maran, Valuti, etc.[83] As the name indicates, Meenavar, originally must have been indicated as fishermen origin to the Pandyas, which it could easily refer to the Kings with the fish emblem, even as Villavar indicated a hunter origin to the Cheras [84] Kauravas and Panchavar were the result of the attempt to connect them with the heroes of Mahabharata and as a consequence the legend of Arjuna's matrimonial alliance with the Pandyan family. Tennavan means the southerner and easily refers to the Pandyas, as the Kunavar refers to the Pandyas, as the Kudavar refers to the Cheras. Celiyan and Valavan are perhaps derived from the words Celumai and Valamai meaning fertility and prosperity. Cheliyan is found to be the most common title in the names of the Pandyas such as Nedunjeliyan. llanjeliyan and Vetriver Cheliyan. Maran was perhaps used as an equivalent of Tennavan as these two words can refer to the Lord of the southern direction namely Kala.[85]

Sources

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[80] Caldwell, R., A History of Tirunelvelly, Delhi, 1982, p. 12.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Subramanyan, N., Sangam Polity, Op.cit., P. 38.

[83] Silambu xv: 2; Puram 58 ; Silambu. iv : 22.

[84] Subramanyan, Op.cit., P. 39.

[85] Ibid.

Coins defenitely attributable to the early Pandyas are very rare. A few gold specimen to the Pandyan emblem of fish are known. Hence they do not help for the study-of the Pandyan History.[86] Only the Non - Tamil references such as the Bible, foreign notices, Arthasastra and Asoka's Rock Edicts throw light on the antiquity of the Pandyas, besides the references found in Sangam Literature and the Puranas. None of the legends in the Thiruvilaiyadal Puranams of Perumparrappuliyur Nambi and Paramjothi Munivarand Halasmahatmya can be taken as proof as they mention the same name of the King in all the lists, to have founded in Madura.[87]

The oldest Dravidian word found in any written record in the world, appears to be the word for peacock in the Hebrew text book of Kings and Chronicles in the list of the articles of the merchandise from Tarshish and Ophir (Uvari) in Solomon's ships.[88]

Valmiki Ramayana mentions, that the Pandyan Kingdom was lying on the way to Srilanka. Mahabharata narrates, that one Vijaya married a princess in Madurai, which corroborates with the reference in Mahavamsa, that the first ruler of Ceylon, Vijaya had matrimonial alliance with the Pandyan family in Madurai. Caldwell opines, that Mahabharata story of Vijayan marrying a Pandyan princess might be a wholly unwarranted invention of the Tamil translator. Anyhow these two epics prove that the Tamil Kingdom was in existence when they were written.[89] Kautilya in his Arthasastra, gives the place of honour among the pearls of Tamraparani, Pandyan Kavatakam and the cotton fabrics of Madurai.

Megasthenes, the Greek Ambassador in the court of Chandra Gupta Maurya (324 - 300 B. C) gives an account of what he saw and heard in this country. His account of the Pandyan Kingdom is the first authentic source. But scholars do believe that his

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86 Sastri, K. A. N., Pandyan Kingdom, Luzac, 1929, p. 9.

87 Ibid., p. 13.

88 Caldwell, R., Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian languages, London, 1913, p. 127.

89 Caldwell, R., A. History of Tinnevelly, Op.cit., p. 13.

statements on the Pandya country are mixture probably of dependable historical truth and pleasant gossip, though his description of what he saw is credible and seems to be indubitable, as notices are based on hearsay were naturally conditioned by his informant's veracity or lack of it.[90] He narrates that the Pandyan kingdom was in fact a Queendom; it was never ruled by males. Heracklels[91] had a daughter by name Pandaia who be queathed the southern part of the peninsula from her father and hence the country came to be called Pandya after her. This is rather contrary to the Indian tradition of patriarchy. There is hardly any case of women ruling the land of her own right, in later Tamil country.

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[90] Subramanyan, N., History of Tamil Nadu, Op.cit. P. 13.

[91] Subramanyan opines, that Herackles is the Greek equivalent of Siva, History of Tamil Nadu, p. 44. Caldwell says that the Krishna myth has fed the story. History of Tirunelvelly, p. 15,

He adds that there was a practice of citizens paying their tribute to the royal household in kind and in appointed terms. This is confirmed by a reference in Silambu to this Cowherdess turn to provide milk products to the royal household. Katyayana mentions about the Chola and Pandyas in the 4th century B. C. There are references about the Pandyas in HathiGumppa inscriptions (3rd century B. C.)[92]

The most important, earliest and indubitable reference to Cholas, Pandyas, the Satyaputras and the Kerala Putras as far as Tambraparani (Ceylon), as independant neighbours beyond the imperial borders, is in the rock edicts of Asoka. Recently, the existence of. rock cut beds with the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions have been brought to light,[93] which confirm its reception of Buddhism mentioned in Rock Edict XIII and the Mahavamsa. But they throw light on, that the possession of alphabetical system was one of the factors in the civilisation of the Pandyan Kingdom in the 3rd and 2nd centuries B. C, if not earlier.

Moon worship was a persistent faith with the Tamils and as a consequence the Pandyas too, believed that they were the descendants of the Moon God. Perhaps it was the earliest belief which suggests the divine origin for the Kings of Tamilakam. So also, the Cholas believed that they descended from the Sun God, which was perhaps an after thought to have a competitive title to match the Pandyan lunar race. It is therefore, no doubt, that these attempts made to explain the ancient titles of these Pandyas prove the antiquity of the Pandyas.

Sangam

These Pandyas seemed to be great scholars and founded an academy in which the men of letters, composed verses on various aspects of life of the Tamils. They tried

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[92] Pillay, K.K. **History of Tamil Nadu,** Her People and Culture, Madras, 1971, p. 97.

[93] Ibid., p. 79.

to wean the wordly ambitions of the Kings and tried to inculcate in them a quench of thirst for the salvation of the soul A large number of poems composed by the poets of this academy is collectively known as Sangam literature. The age in which these poets lived and wrote their literary works is called the Sangam Age. Sangam is a Sanskrit word which means an association of poets. A Sangarn of poets is therefore, as, association of poets. There are different views about the historicity of the Tamil Sangam.

There is no term Sangam used in the Sangam literature. The laudatory preface to the Tolkappiam composed by Permamparanar, a contemporary of Tolkappiyar says that Tolkappiam was subjected to hostile criticism by Athankottasan, another contemporary in the avaiyam of Nilantaru Tiruvir Pandiyan. The term used is Avaiyam,[94] MaduraiKanchi gives the predecessors of Nedunjeliyan II (Conqueror of Talaiyanamkanam battle) as Nilandaru Tiruvir-Pandiyan, famous for the institution of the assembly of good scholars of reputation and Palyakasalai Muthukudumi Peru[95]

It is brought to light that there was also a Buddhist Sangam.[96] Kalittogai gives an account of great scholars.[97] Nedunjeliyan II refers to an association of Scholars for which Maruthan of Mankudi was the President.[98] The term Sangam is applied for the first time during the 6th century by the Saiva saint Appar.[99] Gnanasambandar used the word Tokai[100]. Therefore it is clear that there was an academy of wisemen and according to Akapporul there were three Sangams at Thenmathurai, Kapadapuram and Madurai respectively.[101] The scholars assume, that the Sangams existed from the 4th

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94 Tolkappiyam, Pref.

95 Pattupattu, 6:761 – 763.

96 Manimegalai, XXX3; VII; 113 – 114.

97 Kali-68., Kali-35.

98 Puram, 72.

99 Appar Devaram Tirupputtur Tiruttandagam 3.

100 Gnanasambandar Devaram Thiru Alavai Patikam,

101 Akapporul.

century B. C. to 4th century A. D. which can be treated as just a hypothesis.[102] Though there are references about some Pandyas in the Sangam literature, it is very difficult to trace out their history. Iraiyanar Akappond says that Kaisinavaluti was the founder of the first Sangam and Kadungon was the last patron of it. It speaks again of Venter Celian to Mudattirumaran as rulers who patronised the second Sangam from Kapadapuram and mentions Mudattirumaran to Ukkiraperuvaluti as the Pandyan patrons of the last Sangam. An effort has been made to throw some light on the Pandyas who had been an inspiration to the poets of whom the earlist were Vadimbalamba Ninra Pandiyan and Pandiyan Palyakasalai Muthukudumi Pentvaluthi who existed before the destruction of Kapadapuram.[103]

Pandyas of the Second Sangam

The earlist name of Pandya available is Nilantharu thiruvir Pandiyan. He was also known as Meikeerthi. Nachinarkkiniyar, the commentator of Tolkappiyam says, that Tolkappiyam was read in the court of Nilantharuthiruvir Pandiyan and ruled for 24000 years which must have been an exaggeration. Perhaps, this King lived for a very long period as he is called Nediyon.[104] He created the river Pakruli before the deluge and celebrated a festival for the Sea God.[105] His achievements find a place in the Thiruvilaiyadal of Madura[106] and also among the traditional achievments of the Pandyan Kings mentioned in general terms in the Velvikkudi and Sinnamanur Plates.

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[102] Subramanyan, N. Sangam Polity, op.cit., p. 10. He concludes that the true Sangam period is from 3rd century B.C. to 3rd Century A.D. History of Tamil Nadu. p. 43.
Pillay, K.K. is of opinion that the Sangam existed between 4th Century B.C. to 3rd Century A.D. History of Tamil Nadu and Culture. p. 83.

[103] Tolkappiya Payira Urai (Nac.) No. 21.

[104] Puram : 9 ; Mathurai. 60-61.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Nambis Thiruvilaiyadal, No. 21.

Palyakasalai Muthukudumi Peruvaluthi

He is a more tangible figure who is praised by three poets, in five short poems.[107] He was a patron of poets and benefactor. He had a number of conquests and he ploughed the conquered territory with white mouthed asses. Known as Muihukudumi he performed many sacrifices (Yagnas) and he came to be called Palyakasalai Muthukudumi Peruvaluthi.[108]

The Sinnamanur Plates contain an indirect reference to him as the performer of many sacrifices. He was the original donor of Velvikkudi, which was confiscated by the Kalabhras and later awarded to the original donees by Nedunjadayan Parantaka.[109].

Maruthan of Mangudi who glorifies Nedunjeliyan II pays tribute to this King.[110] Therefore, the references found in Sangam literature were later on confirmed in the Inscriptions and Copper Plates too.

As Nettimaiyai blesses him to live for a long period like the sands of river Pakruli he should have lived before the deluge. He was a devotee of Lord Siva and had great reverence for the wise and good.

The Pandyas of the Third Sangam

The scholars believe that the Sangam came to an end in the third century A. D. Iraiyanar Akapporul says that there were Kings altogether and the researchers assume that each reigned for 40 years approximately.[111] The Akapporul gives the names of the first and last rulers of all the three Sangams.[112] The Sangam literature, such as

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[107] Nettimaiyar, PURAM 9, 12, 15; Nedumpalliyattanar Puram 64; Karikala, Puram 6.

[108] Puram 6; 64.

[109] Velvikkuid Grants.

[110] Mathurai; 759; 761 - 762

[111] Pandarathar, T.V.S., **Pandyar Varalaru,** Madras. 1972, p. 8.

[112] Akapporul, pp. 7-8.

Akananuru, Purananuru, Kuruntogai, Paripadal Mathuraikanci, Silappathikaram and Manimegalai give an account of a few Pandyan Kings, among whom Mudathirumaran was the earliest.

Mudathirumaran

He was the last of the second Sangam and founder of the third Sangam. After the deluge and destruction of Kapadapuram, he shifted to Manalur place reportedly mentioned as the Pandyan capital in Mahabharata) and then to the persent Madurai.[113] Jatavarman Parantaka Pandya's Copper Plates also assume, that he was the founder of the third Sangam.[114] He was a poet and has two sonnets on Palai and Kurinji to his credit.[115] He was called Mudattirumaran as he was lame.

Pandyan Mathivanan

He was also one of the patrons of the Sangam and the author of a dramaturgy known as Mathivanan Nataka Nul of which only a few Sutras are traceable in the commentary of Adiyarkkunallar on Silappathikaram.

Porkai Pandyan

The story of this legendary Poikai Pandyan is narrated to Kannaki by Mathurauathi, the Goddess of Madurai. He cut his own hand to establish justice on earth and had an artificial golden hand and hence the name. Palamoli also mentions him.[116]

Kadalul Mayntha Ham Peruvaluthi

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113 Ibid., P. 5.

114 Verses, 45-46.

115 Nattrinai : 105, 228.

116 Silappathikaram, 23, 42 – 53; Palamoli v. 76.

The epithet Kadalul Maynta suggests that he got drowned in the sea. He was a poet of eminence and a great warrior. The prefix Ilamperu denotes that he was highly intelligent and philosophic, while he was very young. His verse in Paripadal advising the people to worship the deity Tirumal of Tirumalirunjolai on any account and his wish to live at the foot of the hill, worshipping the lord Tirumal proves that he was a great devotee of Lord Tirumal like Kulasekaralvar,[117] He was good in singing Palai and Kuriniji.[118] His contribution in Puram[119] is another proof for his high intellectualism and philosophical speculations.

Pandyan Arivudai Nambi

He was also a great warrior and philonthropist. As a man of letters, he too had some poems to his credit in the Sangam literature. He always honoured the scholars fulfilling their wishes and an instance to quote was, that he was corrected by a poet Pisir Antaiyar, when he levied heavy taxes and reduced them, in accordance to the wishes of the poet.[120] Perhaps he had no issues for a long lime and when he was blessed with one, his ecstacy knew no bounds and his expression of joy became a beautiful poem in which he says, that blessed by their fascinating deeds.[121] His another poem is in the anthology of Akananuru.[122]

Ollaiyurthantha Bhutha Pandyan

He was a great warrior, an eminent scholar and a patron of poets. He loved his wife who was a woman of virute so much, that he never wanted to part from her and had a host of good friends in Mavan of Mayyal, famous Anthuvanchattan, Athan Azisi

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[117] Paripadal : 15 which was tuned by Maruthuvan Nallaccutanar.

[118] Nattrinai ; 55, 56.

[119] Puram. : 182.

[120] Ibid., 184.

[121] Puram : 188.

[122] Akam : 28.

and Iyakkan and considered that it was a great blessing to be the ruler of the Pandyan kingdom, which is clearly shown in his song of oath.[123]

His beloved queen Perimkoppmdu was also a poetess and her grief at the sudden demise of her husband found expression in a verse on the occasion of her sali, (self-immolation). Inspite of the requests of poets like Mathurai Peralavayar, not to immolate herself,[124] she burnt herself proving that they were inseparables.

Nedunjeliyan I

He was the greatest among the Pandyas of the Sangam age. His victory over the Aryan hordes of the North is indicated by the prefix Ariyappadaikadanta and attested by the expression, Vadaariyanpadaikadania.[125] He was the famous king who ordered the execution of Kovalan (hero of the epic Silappalikaram) in haste and died on the throne itself as soon as he realised his folly, when Kannaki, the widow of Kovalan proved, that the anklet which caused the death of her husband was not the queen's. He was a distinguished poet who exalts education before all other-things. He says that among the sons of a mother it is not the eldest who is honoured but the learned whose counsel even a King will seek.[126]

Nanmaran

After the death of Nedunjeliyan I, his younger brother the prince Vettriver Cheliyan, also known as Nanmaran, who was a viceroy at Korkai, immediately rushed to Madurai and ascended the throne. He restored law and order in the kingdom.[127] He

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[123] Puram : 71

[124] Ibid., 246

[125] Silambu : 23, 14-18

[126] Puram : 183.

[127] Silambu : 23, 14-18.

was a contemporary of Cheran Senguttuvan. He died at Chitra Madam (a hall of portraits,) as the prefix Chitramadathu tunjiya suggests.

Nedunjeliyan II

He was the most illustrious among the rulers of ancient Tamilakam. He ascended the throne as a youth. Hence his enemies Mantaral Cheral Irumporai and a Chola King[128] formed a confederacy with Titiyan of Potikai, Elini ox Athikaman, chief of Takadur, Erumaiyuran or the ruler of the Buffalo country (Mysore), Irunko Venman and Poriman[129] to crush the power of he Pandyas, waged war against the young Pandyan ruler The young Nedunjeliyan attackcd them at their rendezvous at Talaiyanankanam (Talaiyalam Kadu, in Tanjore Dt.) and vanquished the confedarates.[130] and came to be known as Talaiyanankanattu Cheruventra Nedunjeliyan (the victor of Talaiyalankanam battle). Hence the epoch making victory is found celebrated in the Inscriptions of the Pandyas of the 10th century A. D.

The young Pandya was not satisfied with this victory perhaps, and led a large army of the skilled archers and lancers into Milalaikurram, the southern province of the Chola Kingdom and defeated the ruler Evvi, chief of an ancient clan of the Velirs and annexed Milalaikurram to his dominion. He also annexed Mutturkunam the eastern province of the Chera Kingdom.[131] The Pandyas conducted an expedition personally to the Chera territory and the Chera King Cey[132] who managed to escape from custody and was pursued by the Pandyas upto the shores of the western sea and was defeated in a

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[128] Rajukalidos doubts whetehr this King was Rajasuyam Vetta Perunarkilli. This Rajasuyam Vetta Perunarkilli was firendly with Velliambalattutunjiya peruvaluthi, successor or Nedunjeliyan II. History & Culture of the Tamils, 1976, P. 50.

[129] Akam : 36; Mathurai : 127 – 130; 55 – 57.

[130] Ibid., 162. 20-21

[131] Puram : 24

[132] Puram : 17

battle near Musiri.[133] Alumbilvel, one of the feudatory Chiefs of the Chera King was dispossessed of his lands .[134] Another campaign mentioned, seems to be against a Kongu chief, Atikan by name in a place somewhere near Uraiyur.[135]

Nedunjeliyan himself was a poet and when he came to know that the two Kings and the five chieftains were planning to attack him, he got so wild, which made him swear an oath of heroism and victory which became an excellent poem of great force and beauty. This poem shows that he wanted to be glorified by the poets including Nakkirarjais father Kanakkayanar, Paranar and Kalladanar, honoured by the whole world, chief among whom is the learned Maruthan of Mangudi and his kingdom worthy of their poem, and he wanted to be of help to those in need and loved by his subjects.[136]

The King's love of his soldiers and solicitude for the wounded in the camp are beautifully described by Nakkirar, in his Nedunelvadai. Maruthanar of Mangudi is all in praise for Nedunjeliyan, in his Malhuraikanchi, which was composed to wean the kings mind from worldly ambition and to awaken in him a desire for salvation of the soul. The other poet who joined hands with Maruthan is Kudapidaviyanar and the poets who have paid encomium are Kalladanar and Paranar[137] Mokur Palayan was his friend.[138] Two Brahmi Inscriptions discovered in Madurai refers to one Nedunjeliyan. The Mangulam inscription,[139] as read by Iravadam Mahadevan, records the donation of a monastery by an officer of Nedunjeliyan and another discovered by Dr. K. V. Raman and Y.

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133 Akam : 57

134 Mathurai : 344 - 345

135 Kuruntogai : 393; Akam : 253

136 Puram : 72

137 Ibid., 18, 19, 23, 25, 353; 371, Akam : 116, 162, Kur, 393.

138 Mathurai : 771, 772.

139 Dr. Nagasamy confirmed that Mennakshipuram is nearer to the inscriptions and one should not ge t confused with Mangulam. Nagasamy (ed) Kalvettiyal. Damili Inscription, 1972 P. 49.

Subbarayulu records the gift of a cave by a Pandyan chief, probably of the same age.[140] Raju Kalidos attributes these to Nedunjeliyan I.[141] But Iravadam Mahadevan believes, that the Nedunjeliyan in these inscriptions should have lived in the second century B. C, and considers that the two Nedunjeliyans lived after Christ. Dr. R. Nagasamy, also accepts that the inscriptions do belong to the 3rd to 2nd century B. C. but is of the opinion that there are no evidences to prove whether the Nedunjeliyan ruled after Christ.[142] It is, still a mystery who the Nedunjeliyan in the Inscription was and has to be traced out. Kanagasabhai Pillai assumes, that this Pandyan is the one, who died at

Velliambalam and therefore he is known as the Velliambalam Vinjia Peruvaluthi. He says that be ascended the throne a few years before the death of Karikal Chola. After his victory at Talaiyanankanam, he appears to have been on terms of friendship with the great Chola as may be seen from the stanza composed by the poet Karikkannan of Kaveripoompattinam. The period of his reign was most probably from about 90 A. D. to 128 A.D.[143]

Prof. Avvai Duraisamy, says that just to differentiate this Chola, from Karikala Chola, as he was also knowa as Perunthi-rumavalavan, this King was given epithet KurappalH Tunjiya Penimthirumavalan.[144] The other poets who have sung of this King are Erichulur Mathurai Kumaran and Maruttuvan Dhamodharan. So it is clear that he was not the King who died in the temple of

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140 Raman, K. V., Some Aspects., p. 81.
There was a chieftain by name Nedunjeliyan who has secured a place in the antholoy ofpurananuru,239.

141 Raju Kalidos, History & Culture of the Tamils, Madurai, 1976. p – 56.

142 Nagasamy, R., (ed.) Kalvettiyal, Nagasamy, R. ”Tamili Inscription, 1972, p. 53.

143 Kanagasabhai, V., op.cit., p. 84.

144 Puram. 197.

Siva at Madurai (Velliambalam). Hence it is clear that this Nedunjeliyan is not the contemporary of the great Karikala Chola

Kanappereyil Kadanta Ukkirapperuvaluthi.

Ukkiraperuvalulhi, according to Iraiyanar Akapporul Urai was the last ruler of the Pandyas of the third Sangam. Some are inclined to consider him as the son of Nedunjeliyan II., and some attribute him to Nedunjeliyan I.[145] He was a poet, and was traditionally believed to have caused the anthology of Akananuru to be made.[146] It is also believed, that in his court, Kural the immortal work of Tiruvalluvar was published in the presence of 48 poets,[147] A verse supposed to be composed by him, is in the Tiruvalluva Malai. He has rendered a few poems which prove that he was an exponent in singing Kurinji and Marutham."[148]

He proved the strength of his arms by subduing Venkai Marpan, the chieftain of Kanapper (M. Kalaiyarkoil) who had entrenched himself behind a strong fortress in the place[149] and hence the prefix. He enjoyed a short reign perhaps, and nothing further is known of this King. Pandyas were the most glorious rulers of the ancient Tamilagam. Besides the rulers so far referred to, there were some more Pandyas for whom a brief account can be given. But it is impossible to trace out their history from the verses of

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145 Pandarathar, T.V.S., op.cit., p.27, Subramanyan opines that there is no proof to consider him as the son of Nedunjeliyan II. History of Tamilnadu p. 85.
Recently discovered Jambai Inscription about Neduman Anji proves that he was a famous chieftain and perhaps lived somewhere in the age of Asoka or perhaps a century before or after Asoka. There are a number of controversial opinions regarding this inscription. Anyhow the letters are smiliar to the Asoka's Rock Edict. Incase, Atikan, Asokan and Kanapeeryil Kandanta Ukkiraperuvaluthi were contmporaries and this Valuthi if related to one of the Nedunjeliyans, as believed then we can very easily fix the age of that Nedujeliyans, as believed then we can very easily fix the age of that Nedunjeliyans before Christs. But Prof. Mathivanan believes that Ukkiraperuvaluthi was one who lived somewhere between 4th century A.D. to 10th century. Senthamil Selvi, Cilampu 56, Nov. 81.

146 Irayanar Akapporul – pp.6 & 11.

147 Pandarathar refuses this, syaing that this is just a legend.

148 Nattrinai, 98, Akam 26.

149 Puram 21.

Sangam literature. Hence a few lines about them only can be mentioned as given in those stanzas.

Karungai Olval Perumpeyarvaluthi

He was a contemporary of the great Karikala$_t$ whose maternal uncle Irumpidartalaiyar has glorified him in a verse.[150] He was a great warrior and philosopher. Pannadutanta Maran Valuthi Maran was the one who caused to have compiled the Nattrinai and as a scholar, he too has added two verses in Nattrinai.[151]

Nalvaluthi

Composer of the 12th Paripadal glorifying, the river Vaigai, he mentions a festival celebrated when the river was in spate. Kudakarathu tunjiya Maranvaluthi Maran defeated the Kings from the North which earned him name and fame. Cholan Kulamarruthu Tunjiya Killivalavan and Nanjil Valluvan were his contemporaries.[152] He was friendly with a King Marivenko and the Chola Rajasuyam Vetta Perunar[153]

Ilavantikaippalli tunjiya Nanmaran

As he is praised by Nakkirar, it is very clear that this Pandya too, would have lived in the time of Nedunjeliyan II and it is gathered that he was a great warrior and philanthropist. The other poet who glorified him is Maruthan of Mankudi. He had number of issues perhaps, which can be understood from the Puram verses [154] Kanagasabhai assumes that this Nanmaran was the successor of Ukkira Peruvaluthi.[155] Ionians (Yavanas) were importing and selling breweries in Tamilagam during his time.[156]

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150 Puram 3.

151 Nattrinai 97, 301.

152 Puram 51, 52.

153 Ibid., 367.

154 Puram 196, 198.

155 Kanaga Sabhai Pillai, Op.cit., P. 86.

156 Akam, 150.

Pandyan Keeran Chattan

Son of one Keeran was another Chieftain, whose lovable nature made Arrur Moolankilar sing in praise of him.

Kuruvaluthi

A Pandya who has contributed a verse in Ahananuru.[157]

Velliampalathu Tunjiya peruvaluthi

He was the King who was friendly with Kurappalli tunjiya Perunthirumavalavan and praised by Karikannan of Kaverippattinam.[158] The poet praises the Pandyas in such a way, it is clear that the Pandya had to be advised. He adds that their friendship will do good to their subjects to live peacefully and happily, if both the Kings live as friends.

Nambi Nedunjeliyan

There were number of chieftains who helped the Kings of Tamilagam in counselling and invasions and in return the Kings honoured them permitting them to have their names as titles, when these chieftains were successfull in their missions. Nambi was one of these Chieftains who was a great warrior and victor and was awarded the title of Nedunjeliyan. He was a man of good qualities and loved by wise men. His sudden death made the poet Pereyil Muruvalar sing an elegy.[159] The Pandya Kindom came to a temporary termination with the Kalabhra interregnum when they were the soveerign rulers of Tamilagam for three centuries from the middle of the third century A. D.

The Chieftains of The Sangam Age

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[157] Akam, 150.

[158] Puram 58. Kanagasabhai is of the opinion that Nedujeliyan II was the King who died at Madurai temple and hence he was the King called to be the one Velliambalathutunjiya Peruvaluthi.

[159] Puram, 239.

The Tamil country was divided into three big kingdoms and each one was ruled by a clan of Kings during the Sangam Age. This is a fact reported by almost all contemporary, indegenous and foreign evidences. Apart from the Chera, the Chola and the Pandiya Kings, there were a number of chieftains along with imperial clans in and around their Kingdoms. The Sangam period ends with the middle of 3rd Century A. D. The Cholas were the Kings of the eastern region, the Pandiyas of the southern region and the Cheras of the western region of TamilNadu[160] There were also many chieftains either within their territorial jurisdiction or outside the same. They were of immense help to the muventars during the times of war or peace and during the times of their day-to-day activities. They were generally known by the term Velirs.[161] Mangudi Maruthanar, a renowned Sangam poet calls them as Kurunila Mannarkal[162] i.e. chieftains. The great commentators of some of the Sangam works like Nachinarkkiniyar and Peraciriyar also call them as Kurunila mannarkal[163] Since the term Velir is used to denote only a certain clan of such Kings it is good if we call them as Chieftains.[164]

Large Number

In almost all the Sangam Literature, only such chieftains are largely eulogised by the poets. If we were to account their numbers in comparison to the great Tamil Muventhar dynasty, their number can be reckoned in the ratio of 3:1. It is true that the Chieftains out numbered the three great Kings. In Purananuru, the collection of 400 poems of the Sangam Age, which deals with the life of the Tamils, we come across 13 poems which guide the poets towards patrons.[165] Among them the heroes of 8 poems

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[160] Sriupanattruppadai 47-83.

[161] Pathittruppattu 30.

[162] Maduraikkanci, 776.

[163] Ibid, 55; Tolkappiyam, Marapiyal 83.

[164] Velir Chieftains : Ay, Evvi, Pari, Pekam, Nannan, Avi, Irungovel, Maiyoor Kilan, Veliyan, Atan, Vichchikko, Alanjeri Mayinthan, Pidavoor vel, Alumbil vel, Nangoor vel, Alunthur vel.

[165] Puranauuru : 103, 105, 133, 138, 141, 151, 180.

are the Chieftains. In the Pattuppattu we come across 4 great patrons among whom, three were such Chieftains.[166]

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[166] Nalliyakkodan Ilanthiraiyan, Nannan.

Greatness

Like this, these Chieftains were great in every way comparable to the greatness of those three great Kings Parimelalagar says that they were in power from the times of the origin of the great Muventhars.[167] Tolkappiyar clearly states the Muventars are great Kings of the Tamil Country.[168] The commentaries of Nachinarkkiniyar tell us that these Chieftains of the Tamil country originated with the great Muventhars and were powerful in their respective spheres during the time of those great Kings.[169] The same thing is also referred to by Kapilar in the Purananuru.[170] In the Sangam poems, we come across such terms as Tenrumuthir Velir, and Toninuthuveiir as well as Evvit Tolkudi.[171]

Relationship with the Imperial Kings

These Chiefcains had the right to rule over their countries consisting of towns, mountains, forests and other such regions belonging them. Perasiriyar, the great commentator of Tolkap-piyam when commenting on Villum Velum, the beginning lines of Tolkappiya marapiyal, refers to these Chieftains and further tells us that such references can be had by us in the poems like Perumpanattruppadai. These Chieftains were known as the ones who give their daughters in marriage to great Muventars[172] better known as Potumai Cuttiya Muvar, Murriya Tiruvin Muvar, Viral Kelu Muvar, Murasu Munru Alpavar and Mulangu Tanai Muvar.[173]

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167 Kural. 955.

168 Puram. 5, 9a, Tol. Porul. cey. 79.

169 Tol. Akat. 32.

170 Puram. 201.

171 Kuru. 164; Nar. 280; Akam.258; Puram.24; Puram.202.

172 Tol. Akat.30.

173 Puram. 357, 205, 137; Kali. 132; Akam. 31; Poru. 54.

The great Chola king Uruvappalter llancetcenni married the daughter of Alundur Vel. Karikalan, the son of Ilancetcenni married the daughter of Nangoorvel.[174] The Chera King, Uthiyan Cheralathan married Nalini, the daughter of Veiiyan Venman Imayavaramban Neduncheraiathan married Paduman Devi, daughter of Vel Aavikkoman.[175] Selvakkadunko, the Chera King married another Paduman Devi, daughter of Vel Aavikkoman while Peruncheral Jrumporaimarried Anthuvan Chellai daughter of Maiyoor Kilar Venman.[176]

Status

Though the Chieftains relationship with the three great Kings, they were differentiated by these poets clearly from the great Kings. They considered the Muventars as emperors. While referring to the Velirs as the only Chieftains. It is clear from the following reference by a great poet, Pcnuuhalai Chattanar that he was waiting for quite a long time to get presents from a Chieftain called Kadiya Nedu Vettuvan. Being disgusted of the delay and disrespect, he tells that I would not accept even if the Great Muventhars give me riches without showing respect and if so how can I tolerate the indifference of this Vettuvars who are inferior to the great Kings [177]

Another poet, whose name is not known tells that Anni, a Cheiftain, is great but the emperors are greater than he is[178] Ponmudiyar calls a Chieftain as a petty Chieftain of a town encircled by a fence of cotton plants.[179] Another poet calls a Chieftain as the King of only one fort Pathittruppattu also makes such distinction between the King and

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[174] Tel. Akat.30.

[175] Pati. Pati 2, 4.

[176] Pati. Pati. 8, 9.

[177] Puram, 205.

[178] Nar. 180.

[179] Puram. 205.

the chieftains.[180] In a number of poems, we come across the term Ventharum Velirum.[181] But the poets respected only the emperors and the Chieftains ''who respected them". Poem from Purananuru clearly refers to the same in general.[182] Greatness

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[180] Patikam 6, 8, 9.

[181] Patir. 30, 49, 75, 68.

[182] Puram. 197.

By their valour and patronising qualities, the Chieftains became great, and we come across many Chieftains who earned name and fame. Tais is understood by the qualifying epithets, to their names such as Velavikko Perumpegan% Ollaiyur Kilan Magan Perunchattan, Kandeerakko Peru Nalli, etc.[183]

In almost all the Sangam Anthologies, Kapilar's eulogy of Pari, Avvaiyar’s eulogy of Atihaman and Mosikeeranar's eulogy of Aay Andiran are the excellent examples for praising the Chieftains even above the Kings.

It is but an ancient custom to refer to those 7 Chieftains in particular as the great 7 patron (Kadaiyelu Vallalgal). Because they excelled all other Kings in their patronage, courage, benevolent administration and munificence. Perunchittiranar, tells us that there were 7 great patrons before the times of Kumanan.[184] We come across three different references about the order of those 7 patrons. Perumchittiranar puts them as- Pari, Ori, Malayan. Elini, Pegun, Aay and Nalli. Nattattanar in his Sirupanattrupadai refers to them as Elu Samam Kadantha Eluvurl Thinithol Eluvar and in the order as Pegan, Pari, Kari, Aay, Atigan, Nalli and Ori.[185] On the otherhand, Awai, in one of her poems quoted by a commentator of Tolkappiyam, tells their order as follows: Pari, On, Nalli, Elini. Aay, Pegan and Malayan.

These three poets Perumchittiranar, Nattattanar and Avvaiyar differ from each other in their order of references to the Seven great Chieftains of these seven patrons, Atiyaman Anchi is mentioned by Nattattanar and Elini is mentioned by Avvaiyar and Perunchittiranar. Both Atiyaman and Elini belong to the same clan. Hence it may be inferred that the names of the seven patrons of the Sangam Age (Kadaiyelu Vallalgal)

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183 Puram. 141, 242, 148

184 Puram. 158.

185 Sirupan. 84 – 111.

are not the names of particular individuals but the genetic names of the respective clans and the members of the same clans.[186]

[186] Pattinap. 282.

Nachinarkkiniyar, while attempting to comment on the word Irungovel Marungu tells us about the 5 Great Velir clans. One Akananuru poem refers to those 5 great Chiefs as Irungovel, Elini, Tithiyan, Erumaiyooran and Porunan.[187] Paranar refers to the great battle of Venni fought by the Great Karikalan and the Eleven Velirs,[188] whereas the same Paranar refers in another place to the destruction of a city of Kamoor of the Chieftain Kaluvul by 14 Velirs.[189] Nakkeerar refers to 5 Velirs and two Kings Cheran and Chempiyan. In one poem, he refers two Kings Chera and Chola without any adjective, whereas the Five Chieftains are spoken of with eulogising epithets.[190]

Wearing Crown

Another difference between the Muventhars and the Chieftains is that the former had the right to wear crowns, whereas the jailer had no such privilege. Referring to the rights of the Kings and Chieftains, Tolkappiyam clearly expresses in Marapiyal, that the Muventhars had the right to wear crowns while the chieftains had no such right.[191]

The Malayaman Chieftains were under the Cholas. They served the Chola Kings in different aspects as vassal, chief of the army and ministers. Tervan Malayan fought against the Cheras in alliance with the Cholas. But still the Chola King Killivalavan defeated Malayaman Tirumudikkari and Kidnapped his young Children so as to be crushed under an elephant's feet.[192] Kanagasabai Pillai considered that this was due to Kiltivalavar’s intolerance of Thirumudikkari's wearing the crown.[193] But if a King among

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187 Akam, 36.

188 Ibid; 246.

189 Ibid; 135.

190 Ibid; 36.

191 Tol. Purar. 5, Mara. 72. 83.

192 Puram 174, 125, 46;

193 Ayirettennuru Andukatku Murpatta Tamilagam p. 184.

the Muventhars were to loose his original crown and garland in a war, he should wear atleast ordinary ones. An

example of this kind is of the Chera King when is known as Kalancaykkanni Narmudicheral [194] i. e. who were a crown made out of fibres (narmudi).

Chieftains and their Territories

Though these Chieftains were either friendly with the Muventhars or fought against them or helped them in one way or, other, still they had their own independent territories as towns, or mountain regions or forests or plains.

Ampar Kilan Aruvanthai, Ilangai Kilavan, llaiyoor, Kilan, Karumbanoor Kilan, Konkanam Kilan, Sirukudikilan Nannan, Nalai Kilavan Nagan, Pidavoor Kilan, Poraiyaru Kilavan, Por Kilavan, Malli Kilan Kari Aathi, Muthirattu Kilavan, Maiyoor Kilan Vallam Kilavan Vallar Kilan Pannan, Needoor Kilavan[195]

The following areas referred to in the Sangam literatures are known to have belonged to the chieftains. Idaikali nadu, Oyma nadu, Ollaiyoor nadu, Tulunadu, Konadu, Nanjil nadu, Punnadu, Poolinadu, Palkunvakkottam, Mukkaval nadu, Kudavayil Kottam, Kunra nadu, Mithootru Kootram, Parambu nadu, Milaiai Kootram, Erumai nadu, Kollikkootram[196]

The Chieftains had their rightful areas such as Nadus, Kottams and Kootrams. The names Ur, Nadu, Kottam and Koottram are referred also to in Poolankurici Tamil Brahmi Inscription. Vicci and Niyamam were called ancient towns. In these towns also like those of the emperors, capitals, there were forts with fortifications deep moats full of water and palaces. The terms referring to some of the forts are Kanappereyil, Kudavayil, Kadampin Peru Vayil and Kudanthai Vayil, etc.[197]

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194 Patti 38, 40; Akam. 199.

195 Puram. 385, .379, 242, 281, 154, 71, 179, 395, 391, 177, 158. Nar. 10; Akam 15, 253 Malai; Peruntogai 2109; Patigam 4, 8;

196 Sirupan; Puram. 380, 80, 110, 242, 54, 74, 24; Akam 15, 253 Malai; Peruntogai 2109; Patigam 4, 8;

197 Puram. 2; Akam. 44; Nar. 379;

Chieftains and the Muventars

Sirukudikilan Panan, a Chieftain, was praised by the Chola King Killivalavan ''Let him live long including the years of my life."[198] The Kings had cordial relation with the chieftains. Some of the Kings praised the valour and liberality of the chieftains. The Bhooda Pandyan had a number of chieftains as his friends. He used to dine and converse with them in a happy mood.
He considers them so dear to him as his own eyes.[199] The Chera king, Senguttuvan who controlled the seas, had a chieftain called Arugai as his friend. Though the chieftain is ar away from him, he feels that he is very near and dear to him Iways; and this is reported by the poet Paranar in his poem.[200]

The word young and its meaning

In the Sangam poems we come across many number of Chiefs and the particular name with an attribute to indicate the relationship of the Kandeerakko, Ilam Kandeerakko, Kumanan, Ilam Kumanan, Reliman, Ila Veiiman, Vichchikko, Ila Vichchikko, Palayan maran, Ilampalayan maran, Thiraiyan, Ilanthimivan

The scholars and the critics consider that the young, Kumanan (llang Kumanan) appears to be the brother of Kumanan'[201]. Likewise, they consider the other cases also that the word Ham refers to the younger brother. But in the poem where we find the reference to Kumanan and Ham Kumanan, there is a statement telling us that the former is a relative of the latter (Kilamaiyon) and not as his brother.

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[198] Puram. 173.

[199] Puram. 71.

[200] Pati. 44.

[201] Puram. 163.

In the Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions, too we come across such references as Ilamchadigan thanthai Chadigan, Anthai magan Sey Athan,Anthai Sey Athan[202] If we consider that the same tradition might be found during the Sangam period also, we can infer that the term Ham may refer to the son of the person concerned.

[202] Corpus of Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions 2. 13, 24.

Names of the Chieftains

Great Chieftains were revered, respected and commmemorated by their people as well as by the latter generations by naming towns, hills and places after them. Such references are in plenty and a few of them are as follows: Thanthoni malai (Thaman Tonrikkon malai), Vilignam (Veliyan),Pundurai(Punrurai), Kodumudi (Kodumudi), Kattipalayam (Kaiti), Athigappadi (Athigan) Nedumanoor (Neduman Anci), Oricchari (Ori), Nalliyoor (Nalli), Pariyoor (Pari), Thondaiman Athoor (Tondaiman), Nannanoor (Nannan), Anniyoor (Anni), Kariyoor (arl), Malayanoo (alayan), Aykudi (A ay).

Atiyaman of Takadur

In the Asokan Inscriptions, there is a mention of his neighbouring countries by the following expression - "Chola Pandya Sathiyaputho Kerala Putho Thamba Paani Andhiyoga Nama Yonalaja".[203] In this expression, the first two are obviously the Chola and the Pandya countries, the fourth is that of the Cheras. But till recently the word Salhiya putho was considered by some scholars as Sathiya Puthirar, who, ruled the Thulu country consisting Niyamam, Neidalan-cheru, Vattaru, Nalur and Kongu country. They are known as Kocars, the Warrior tribes.[204] Kocars were held in high esteem by the contemporary literature as best friends, sweet tongued who always keep their words, and the one who always speak truth.[205] But truthfulness was not the exclusive right or property of the Kocars alone, since the attribute is given to others also by the poets. Vaymoli Mudiyan, Vaymoli Thahtmban, Poyyariya Vaymoli are some of the attributes given by the poets of the Sangarn period to others as well,[206] Some scholars interpreted Sathiya Puthirar as Athihaiman or Athiyaman. Thiru K. G. Sesha Iyer, Prof. K.

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203 The Express Weekly Magazine, 6 – 12 – 81.

204 Akam. 15, 90, 113; Puram. 396;KuTU. 15; A.R.E. 11/1906; Silambu – Uraiperu Katturai.

205 Akam 216, 262, 251, 15, 205, 113; Puram. 282; Kuru. 73.

206 Nar. 390; puram. 348; Madurai. 19.

A. N. Sastri and Prof. Burrow have given expression to this view. The term Sathiya Putra directly refers to Atiyaman. In the recent inscription deciphered at Jambai, there is a single line reference Sathiyaputho Atiyan Neduman Anji Eeththa Pali.[207] This is a direct reference to Atiyan as Sathiya puthra and hence it becomes certain that Sathiyaputra of Asokan Edicts is none other than Atiyan. Atiyan happens to belong to Chera clan. Utiyan is a title to the Chera Kings and it occurs in many places of the Sangam literature also. Likewise the name Atiyan may be the title taken by the ancestors of Thakadur Atiyan.

Atiyan + Makan (son) = Atiyan Makan = Athiyaman,

It should have become so in the course of ages. That the word Makan might become Man, is an accepted phenomenon by the linguists. There are other such references also in the Sangam Literature testifying to this fact. Vel + Makan = Venman; Vel + Magal = Venmal are such examples. Just as the word Peya became Per in the long run, like that Makan became Man. The sound A in Tamil was pronounced as SA in the North Indian languages. Thus the Tamil Ammarar is equal to Samanar of the North Indian languages. Like that the Tamil expression of Aayiram has become Sahasram in Sanskrit. Like that, Atiyan must have become Sathiyan in North India. Thus Atiya Makan must have become Sathiya Puthra just as the Cherar Makan became Keralaputhra. The rule A = SA holds good in the case of CA = KA Some are of the opinion that, this inscription is of later date because it contains the word 'Putra'.[49] In the 366th poem of the Purananuru , Dharma Puthran is called as Aravonmakan. During the Sangam period there was an active social intercourse between the north and the south. The Tamils visited many North Indian places like The Himalayas, The Ganges. Benaras, The River Sone, etc. Likewise the North Indians also frequented the different places in the Tamil country. Vadugar, Vadavar, Aryakoothar. Arya Porunan, Aryan Kings, Aryans,

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[207] The Hindu 9-10-1981 (49A) Senthamil Selvi Nov. 1981 p. 122-129.

Nandas, Moriyars, Kalingars and such others had also visited the Tamil Country during the Sangam Age. In many poems of the eight Anthologies, we come across many names of North Indians, like Kasyapan, Kaunian, Atheryan, Madalan, Kumaran, Gowdhama, Markandeyar, Sahadevan, Rudhran, etc., taken by the Tamil poets. These names undoubtedly establish the South Indians contact with the North Indians. Even the Ceylonese Poets were the members of the Sangam. Ham Pothiyar, Ulocchanar, etc, are some of the Sangam poets who were Buddhists and Jains-Why, the relatives of Atiyaman went a long way to get the Sugarcane to be brought to South India for cultivation. This has become now an established fact. So there are a lot of possibilities for the North Indian ways of expression finding a place in the Tamil epigraphs. In many of the Tamil Brami Inscription that are found in the Tamil Country, we come across some North Indian words.

The Inscription in question is found near Thirukkovilur. During the Sangam period, the word Koval was connected with only the Thirukkovilur. That city was the capital of Malayaman Thinimudikkari. That his country was a Brahmadeya Country is vouchsafed by the statement of Kapilar, Kari Nin Nade Alal Piirandaroom Andhanaraduvc. Another poet of the same period sings the greatness of the capital Thus the surrounding Aryans lived in a large scale.[208] So there is every possibility of such an expression as Puthra, in the Inscription found in and around Thirukkovilur. The towns bearing the commemorative names of Atiyan like ThiruAtigai and Nedumanur are also found near Thirukkovilur. Therefore the very word Sathiyaputho directly refers to Athiyaman.

But some doubt why the word Athiyan still comes after that name Sathiyaputho, But if one keenly observes the etymological developments during the Sangam period, one can understand that this sort of repetition is also possible as it occurs in many other places. For example, Seraman Mantharan Cheral, Keeran Keeranar, Nannan Sey Nannan,

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[208] Puram. 122; Nar. 170.

Peyan Peyanar, Adhan Sey Adhan, etc.,[209] are some of the names found in the Sangam literature as well as in some of the Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions. So the word Atiyaman Atiyan might have been Inscribed as Sathiyaputho Atiyan in the Jambai inscription.

[209] Puram. 53; Nar.78,259, Kuru. 233; Malai; Vikramanagalam Inscriptions.

In the Inscription in question we come across Tamil Brahmi letter referring to the Tamil letter. It ends twice with the words Atiyan and Neduman. But the letter was a later development and it was referred in inscriptions as The absence of the latter letter in the said inscription is a proof positive to show that it may belong to the time of Asoka probably 3rd century B. C. and not I century A. D.[210]

In Sangam literature, we come across 5 chieftains of Atiyaman clan.

Atiyaman Ncdun.idal, Atiyaman Neduman Anci, Atiyaman Poguttelini, Atiyaman And Atiyaman Elini[211]

It seems that these chieftains assumed the titles and Elini in succession. Hence, we can say that the Chieftains of the Sangam Age were great warriors, patrons of Arts and Letters, philanthropists and radical humanists. In some respects, they excelled the Kings of the three great royal dynasties of ancient Tamil Nadu.

CHAPTER - V

SOCIAL LIFE

The Sangam Age is considered to be the 'Golden Age' of the Tamils. Literature is the main source to know about the life of the early Tamils. New archaeological discoveries and the records of the foreigners also help to ascertain extend to confirm the details we get from literary sources. In this chapter an attempt is made to trace the 'homelife' of the ancient Tamils. Many scholars have brought to limelight various aspects of Sangam Culture. So, some significant features are being dealt with in detail here. It includes the shelter, food, clothing, occupation amusements of the Tamils and the position of women during the period under study.

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[210] Refer No.45.nn

[211] (A) Akam. 266 Pati. 32; (B) Puram B-7-95, 103. 104, 206, Nar. 381 Kuru. 91 (C) Puram. 96, 100, 102 (D) Akam. 115, 325, 373(E) Puram. 158. nm.

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Shelter

The housing of the Tamils depended on their economic status. It differed from group to group i.e.people living in Mullai, Marutam, Palai, Neithal and Kurinji. The Mullai and Marutham people lived in comfortable and bigger houses compared to that of Kurinji and Neithal people. As the reason for the same may be that the Kurinji and Neithal people had to live in the hilly tracks and near the sea-shore respectively. Hence Ahananuru describes that the Neithal and Kurinji people lived in huts.[311] The day to day problems to be faced by the Mullai and Marutham people were less than that of the Neithal and Kurinji people. Hence the former led a more settled and comfortable life. The rich built their houses with burnt bricks and mud. Both in the huts and houses the flooring was smeared with cowdung.[312] It is really strange to note a reference in Manimegalai to the smearing with sandal paste.[313] The rich people had houses with porticoes and open terraces and big storeys. The inner walls of the houses were decorated with flowers and paintings.[314] References to cottage which provided protection only from the wind is not unknown.[315]

Though there are more than one opinion regarding the existence of Caste System during the Sangam Age, Scholars unanimously agree to the view that there were occupational groups. Especially in big cities, the residences of the occupational groups were located separately. References to the Ceris of washerman, oilmongers, wine sellers, carpenters, blacksmiths, sculptors, goldsmiths, tailors, jewellers, potters, musicians, brahmins, prostitutes, actresses, cobblers etc. are found in Sangam

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311 Akananuru 12. 1.9

312 Perumpanattruppadai, 298.

313 Manimegalai XIX. 115.

314 Ibid; III. 128 – 130.

315 Purananuru, 196. 1. 12.

literature.[316] It was viewed that the separate residence of people of different castes and occupations was due to the growing ideas of cleanliness and purity.[317] If this view is taken, it is made sure that there existed caste system in the Sangam age. It can be presumed that the allotment of separate Ceri for each occupational group may be to locate the respective group without any difficulty which perhaps later led to caste distinction among the Tamils.

The rich houses were equipped with furniture. Cots were very much in use.[318] The wealthy people had luxurious beds decked with swan's feathers and flowers.[319] The common people had beds woven with she straw of maize. The poorest section used beds made of grass or hay.[320] Parched hides and skins of animals were also used.[321]

Clothing

Beautiful and nice variety of dresses were used by the rich people according to their status. Cotton and silk clothes of high qualify find a reference in Sangam works.[322] Men wore only two pieces, one around the waist and the other the upper cloth thrown over the shoulders.[323] As in the present time, the poorer people wore only one piece of cloth around the waist.[324] Though silk was not commonly used, it was donated to the poets by the rich. People living in hilly and deserted areas wore dresses made of foliage and flowers.[325] Young' girls used to wear this sort of dress known as talai when

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316 Silappatikaram XIV. 212; V. 10 – 5.

317 Pillai K.K., A Social History of the Tamil, Vol.1, Madras, 1975, pp. 280 – 281.

318 Puram 72; Perumpan 150; Maduraikkanchi. 713.

319 Akam 167, 289.

320 Puram 317.

321 Akam 58; Maduraik 310 – 311; Perumpan 89 -90.

322 Puram 398; Maduraik 433; Porunararruppadai 82 – 83.

323 Puram 189.

324 Kalithogai 18, 1. 10.

325 Nattrinai 8; Akam 70; Ainkurunuru 15 & 72.

they met their lovers,[326] and the lover sent talai to his lady-love to know whether she had accepted him or not.[327] This was also accepted as bathing dress by young girls[328]

Sheaths of grassy weeds (korai) were used for making dress by people living in hilly and forest areas. Skins of animals and barks of trees were also used by some to cover their bodies. Those who renounced the world wore skins of deer.[329] It is stated that the Brahmins washed their clothes daily and wore the same.[330] This may be due to the fact that they were assigned priestly duties and performed rituals. They were expected to be cleaner and neater than the other occupationists. Moreover, other occupational groups like peasants, smiths etc., had to do manual work and they had to go their respective jobs early in the morning and return late in the evening and they would feel comfortable only after having had their bath after their return. It is really strange to note that none of the sources refers to women's upper garment. They wore dress around their waist but their upper portion was not at all covered though it was later presumed that they wore Kachchu. Women of the sophisticated society used to wear bras and kacchus. They used to cover their upper body with half-sarees. Women decorated their breasts with flowers and Sandal paste.[331]

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326 Nar 368; Kuruntogai 295.

327 Kurunt 214.

328 Aink 15 & 72.

329 Tirumurukattuppadai 127 – 130.

330 Mullaippattu 37.

331 Kalith 111 & 115, Nar, 225.

Hairdress and Cosmetics

Both men and women had long stresses of hair. Plaiting of the hair was a symbol of unmarried girls.[332] After the marriage, they decorated their hair in five different manner (ie.) Kuial Alagam, Kondai, Paniccai and Tuncai. The widows were not permitted to have their stresses of hair.[333]

To cool down the head and provide some fragrance, women applied a kind of clay like cream on their hair.[334] Women were fond of flowers and there are references to men and children wearing flowers in the Sangam age.[335] Unmarried and married women except widows wore colourful and beautiful Tilakam on their forehead[336] They also used coliyrium to beautify their eye lids and brows.

Footwear

Soldiers, hunters and vendors wore footwears.[337] It is not known why women were not given this comfort. Women were not confined to their homes alone. They were visiting the temples, market places, gardens, rivers, tanks etc. But inspite of that there is not even a single reference to women wearing footwears.

Jewellery

Rich people adorned themselves with various kinds of jewellery made of pear, precious stones, gold and silver. Floral ornaments also find place in Sangam literary works. Toyya-kam,[338] Pullakam (upperforehead ornament), Maharappakuvai

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332 Kalith 32 & 59; Kurinjippattu 139.

333 Puram 25 ; 250.

334 Kurunt 113, 1. 5.

335 Akam 389; Kalith 92. 1. 35.

336 Akam 389; kalith 92, 1. 35.

337 Puram 257; Akam 34; Perumpan 69; Pattinappali 365

338 Paripadal 7. 1. 46.

Vayantakam and Valampuri (forehead ornaments), Kulai,[339] Siiambu, Mekatai, chains, pendants, tohalai, (shoulder ornament)[340] were a few of them. Aimpadaitali and Pulippaltali were worn by children. Though the tying of tali in the Sangam age is still a controversial matter, there is a reference to mangalavani in Silappadikaram.[341] Purananuru also mentions an ornament worn by married women which could not be given away as a gift to anyone even by the husband.[342] This appears to be the sacred thread which has become the venerable symbol for a married woman. At the time of marriage, bride-groom used to ties this thread in the neck of the bride as an auspicious symbol. The pendant of the thread which is known as tali may be of later origin. It is viewed that in recent times, the craze in respect of ornamentation of the old type had vanished.[343] To the contrary, it is seen that modern women have gone back to old fashioned jewellery. Now a days, unmarried girls are wearing mettis (toe ring), which is the symbol for a married women.

Like women, men also wore ear rings, bracelets, armlets and anklets. The children also wore strings of coral beads around waist, kinkini or anklet, bangles, Aimbadaitali etc As the poor could not afford to have their jewellery of gold and precious stones, they resorted to conch shells and beads.

Food

Though rice was the main food of the Sangam Tamils, maize and millet were also used.[344] The poor had very simple food. Sometimes they had to satisfy themselves with

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339 Akam 3; Kurunt 398.

340 Pari 12, 1. 23.

341 Silamp IV. 50.

342 Puram 127.

343 K.K. Pillay, op.cit., p. 312.

344 Akam, 237, 394; Puram 119.

greens even without salt.[345] Paratavar (fishermen) used fish very much whereas the Mullai people had large quantities of milk products. Similarly the Kurinji people took to meat obtained by hunting. Various kinds of grains were also used by these people in many forms. Rice flakes were eaten with milk, honey, ghee and jaggery.[346] For preparing the food deliciously, the Sangam Tamils made use of salt, tamarind, pepper etc. Ghee was used by rich people.[347] Vegetables and fruits were part of their meals. Meat eating was common. People ate flesh of rams, deer, bare, fowl, porcupines, pigs and boars.[348] Fresh and dried fish was cooked. Though the Brahmins of Sangam age ate meat, they abstained from it due to Jain and Buddhist influence.

Though Tiruvalluvar condemns drinking and meat eating' the early Tamils drank toddy and madhu. These were drunk during festivals and functions. There are references to women indulging in drinking.[349]

Daily Life

The Sangam Tamils woke up early in the morning[350] and had their path in the nearby river or tank.[351] While bathing, both men and women used sweet smelling powders.[352] All occupational groups took to their daily routine and returned home in the evening. It was the duty of the man to earn for his whole family.[353] The wife was called 'illal'[354] and she was the light of the house. Both the husband and wife entertained the

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345 Puram, 159.

346 Akam, 237.

347 Puram, 166, 384.

348 Malaipadukadam, 153, 155, 168, 175 – 178, 246 – 249, 252 425, 563.

349 Perumpan 386 – 387.

350 Puram 383, 385.

351 Ibid – 243.

352 Silap II, 67 – 68, VIII. 21.

353 Akam 33; Kural 615, 616.

354 Kural 52.

guests, learned, Brahmins and ascetics. But if a husband had gone on duty or discarded his wife, she never cared for the above mentioned people.[355] This in turn shows the importance a wife had given to her husband during the Sangam age and how her life was nothing without her husband. Women were considered to impure during the period of monthly menstruation. Various references to Kalamtoda makalir may refer to such women only. Women on the family way used to bathe in cold water, light lamps in the evening and pray to Gods offering milk and food.[356] Women observed pollution for some period after confinement.[357] After that period, they took oil bath in the tank or in the nearby stream. Fragrant flowers and powders were used by women after bath. The paste of white mustard (brassica alba) was also used while bathing.[358] This walls of the house where child birth took place were smeared with a mixture of oil and white mustard seed.[359] Birth of sons was welcomed by the early Tamils as the son was only eligible to perform the obsequies. Another view was that the girls were considered inferior because they had to go to another house after their marriage.[360] The son only succeeded the father as the head of the family. Though the daughters were given jewels and vessels during their marriage, they had no right to claim a share in the. property. Disputes regarding property and relationship were settled by the elders of the locality.[361]

Marriage

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355 Silap XVI. 71 – 78.

356 Maduraik 604 – 610.

357 Ibid. 602 – 603; Mani VII, 75 – 76.

358 Perumpan 16. 11. 3 – 4.

359 Nar 370 11. 3 – 4.

360 K.K. Pillay, op. cit; p. 320.

361 Puram 34; Mani VI, 83 – 91; Silap X. 20.

Marriage was an accepted institution during the Sangam age. Though various forms were known, Karpu and Kalavu forms were found in common- Kalavu was the premarital relationship and the age of the couple who entered into that sort of relationship were twelve and sixteen.[362] Girls were kept under seclusion after attaining puberty,[363] and the love affairs started soon after that. Toll (the maid companion) played an important role in that. Though the elders did not know the affairs, later they themselves arranged for the marriage of the couple. But in the Karpu form, the elders of the two families arranged for the marriage, taking into consideration all important aspects. In this type of marriage the bridegroom paid certain amount of money to the parents of the girl.[364] Winning a girl through bull fight was common among the Mullai people. A man can marry for the second time even when his first wife was alive.[365] Men married even Parathaiyar (harlots) and accepted her as second wife.[366] Loyai harlots were even found of the children born of the first wife and treated them with love.[367] There is no reference to widow remarriage in the Sangam literature.

Amusements

Music, dancing, Vattadal[368] Varippantadal[369] Kalankadutal,[370] Swinging[371] were some of the amusements of girls and women. Men look to hunting, playing with

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362 Tolkappiam – Porul 96, 156.

363 Akam 7

364 Ibid 90, 280; Though this system continues even today in some communities, the cruel system of dowry did not find a place in the Sangam age.

365 Aink, 292, 11. 3 - 5

366 Nar, 30; Ahananuru, 386.

367 Akam 16

368 Nar, 3, Akam, 5.

369 Nar 305.

370 Puram. 36.

371 Nar. 90.

silambam or kali, boating[372] bullfight, etc. Children played with toys and tiny carts. Ram fights and cock fights were common during festivals. Pattinappalai gives a beautiful account of the enjoyment of fishermen and women on fullmoon days.

Festivals

The early Tamils celebrated Karthigai, Tintvonam, Kaman festival and Indravizha. Karthigai decpam was otherwise known as Peruvila[373] and was celebrated in the Tamil month of Karthigai every year.[374] Though Tiruvonam is very grandly celebrated by Keralites in modern times, during the Sangam period, it was a festival of the Tamils celebrated in the month of Avani to denote the birthday of Mayon or Tirumah The Kaman festival was rejoiced in the spring season.[375] During that festival men and women dressed up well and participated in singining and dancing. Harlots also joined men in dancing.[376] Indravizha included the performance of Vedic sacrifices, festivals to various Gods and ganas, musical recitals and dancing. Among all these festivals, Karthigai is the one celebrated all over TamilNadu; Onam is restricted to Keralites; and Karaan festival and Indravizha do not find a place at all in Tamil country today. Some of the significant aspects of the Home life of the early Tamils are pointed out in this paper. They reveal that the Home life of the ancient Tamils was a fascinating one. Not only it was a Home to retire and regain physical, moral and spiritual strength but it was 'The Sweet Home to admire and appreciate and emulated and entertain by the people of the Modern Age.

Urban Life of the Ancient Tamils

In ancient India, cities had flourished either as capitals of the State where royal palaces were situated or as emporia of trade, both internal and coastal. The ancient

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372 Pattinap 23- 26.

373 Akam, 185.

374 Ibid. 141.

375 Kalith 27. 1. 24.

376 Ibid 30. 11. 13 – 14.

Chera, Chola, Pandya Kingdoms had Vanji or Karur, Uraiyur and Madurai as their respective capitals. Descriptions of these cities are found in Sangam Literature and in Silambu and Manimegalai. Apart from these cities, we hear about Kaveripoompattinam, Korkai and Kanchi. These were essentially trade centres where wealthy merchants vied and conducted transactions in various kinds, of goods, both indigenous and foreign. In addition to these, there would have existed some towns not dependent upon agricultural occupations. People of these cities might have employed themselves either in petty trade and other occupations involving handicrafts. While talking about urban life in ancient Tamilagam, we should not think of the modern connotation in distinguishing urban and rural areas. Agriculture-based economy was the order of the day throughout the land. Cities were few and small towns were many. Comparatively speaking capital cities had a different routine depending on the duties of the King and the royal household. Sangam literature does mention a number of cities and towns and gives a vivid descriptions of life in them. Such capital cities as Madurai of the Pandyan Kingdom, Uraiyur and Kaveripoompattinam of the Cholas and, Vanji and Karuvur of the Cheras are mentioned. Besides these, there were the trading port centres as Korkai, Thondi, Musiri and Mallai. Maritime trade was carried on with a number of foreign countries. Merchandise from different parts of the land was brought and often accumulated there. Foreign goods were offered by traders who sold their ware and purchased goods available in the local market. Brisk activity in both exports and imports was found in all these ports. These cities had wealthy merchants who dwelt in palatial buildings enjoying a comfortable life with all sorts of prerequisites and luxuries. The hero and heroine of Silappathikaram hailed from wealthy merchant communities. Kannagi could wear jewellery worthy of royalty and perhaps far surpassing theirs in value. Present day, Tamil Nadu is divided then into five divisions, namely Mullai (Forest region), Kurinji (Mountain and adjoining land), Ateytal (the sea and its neighbourhood), Marutham (Plains) and Palai (desert area).

Capitals

The capital cities were generally situated on the plains, having more often than not a constant and good supply of water. This generally meant proximity of a river, well protected by natural boundaries and walls and bunds built by men. Such cities were well populated in addition to having facilities for communication with the rest of the kingdom. All these facilities apply to Karuvur, Madwai and Puhar.

Marutham was the best suited for the birth and growth of cities. Neythal land allowed maritime cities to flourish having trade activities as their pivot. The rivers that flowed in the plains with their tributaries made the land fertile with their alluvial deposits. Agriculture began to thrive here and a landed aristocracy was very much, in evidence. This artistocracy generally, for practical purposes was on friendly terms with the rulers of the country. They sent contigents to the regular armies whenever the King faced external danger. In return for this timely help the King decorated them with titles and honours such as Kavidhi, Enadhi and Etti. They were allowed special privileges. These aristocrats also served the King in various capacities as officers of the state and as army and navy commanders. They not only enjoyed the previlege of jusconnubi with the royal families but also shared with the King the duties of war and administration.

From authentic sources, it can easily be deduced that the capital cities were always busy. The people were used to the noise, pageantry and the fanfare normally and usually associated with any royal personage and his encourage. It follows then that ambassadors and envoys from the inland kingdoms as well as foreign countries would have presented their credentials to the King and would have been in the habit of visiting him on state matters. The reception and farewell given to such missions would have been accompanied by pomp and pageantry, to which sight the local people would have become accustomed.

Likewise since the Kings patronised art, there would have been a ceaseless flow of wandering minstrels who came to the courts of the Kings, to immortalise them in their poems. Sangam literature is replete with instances of such bards visiting the Kings. The Kings in their turn would treat them with sumptuous food and present gifts of jewels, elephants and grants of land in certain cases. It is recorded that Atihaman Neduman Anji gave a fruit-which would keep the eater immortal-to Awaiyar, the poetess of repute. Ay Andiran gave a herd of elephants to the bards who glorified him in their verses. There were often military manouevres and parades by men belonging to the armed services, the cavalry and the corps of elephants, "the broad roads in the capital were flooded by men in shining armour and it was a storing sight to the populace particularly to young women and children. These urban areas were inhabited by rich Vellalars,

merchants as well as foreigners who had settled in the kingdom. Their residences were generally palatial, storied more often than not colour washed and also decorated with beautiful paintings, There were balconies and decorated windows where voluptuous women displayed themselves. They would either be singing or dancing or witnessing others do these, or engaged themselves in a play called Kalanku or swing.

Further investigations on the literary side reveal that the walls of these cities were as tail as possible to repet invaders, the moat was as deep for the same purpose and on top were observation posts. Constant traffic flowed through the gates of the city while in the bazaar there were dealers in conch bangles, gold, salt, textiles, copper ware, perfumes and sandal post. Trading carts were generally sent in convoys and merchant caravans were escorted.[377] Goods brought to the ports of the Cholas were piled up and the trade was so brisk: that it seemed as if there was no limit to it. Customs officers busily stamped each bundle with the tiger seal of the King and kept it aside.[378] Fishermen and coastal traders called Parathavar imported horses and some kind of white stone. They also traded in pearls and conches ("right whorled) gems-, tamarind, salt and fish. High piled sacks of pepper-a much prized commodity were taken by Yavanas in exchange for gold.[379] At the Chola ports there were always merchant colonies speaking different languages which goes without saying.[380]

Occupational Groups

Sangam literature also mentions diverse occupations. There were Kings, chieftains, scholars, priests who conducted sacrifice, poets, warriors customs officials, shipping magnates, foreign merchants, blacksmiths, carpenters, potters, salt makers, pearl divers, guards, tailors, fisher-folk, dancers, drummers, farmers, shepherds, hunters, weavers and sculptors as well as leather workers. It naturally follows considering the variety of occupations and their diversity that there must have been an elite and a literate society leading an essentially urban way of life. The Brahmi inscriptions on the caves around Madurai and elsewhere mention also the following occupations as charioteer, gold merchants, cloth merchant, those dealing in iron, salt

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377 Kuruntogai 390; Akam 89.

378 Pattinappalai 116 – 137.

379 Puram 343.

380 Maduraik Kanchi 75 – 78.

and toddy. Incidentally it must be mentioned that toddy was a favourate drink of both men and women in ancient days. On the basis of these

reports, we would legitimately suppose that society would have been occupationally quite diversified in the town of Madurai during the Sangam age.

Archaelogical Discoveries

Civilization is generally characterised by urban growth which in its turn must be supported by a fully developed economy specialising in the growth, distribution and export of cereals. Civilisation is also characterised by the existence and continuous construction of permanent building and monuments, the growth of a diversified economy, an elaborately structured society, the existence and practice of formalised religions and the development of politics and a literary elite. Sangam literature is elusive on the exact nature of urban cities since obviously the bulk of the population lived in typical villages reminiscent of the Iron Age. Considerable information about the early towns can be collected from Roman sources about the cities of the Sangam period, (eg. Arikamedu) There were over a hundred town which are named as political and trade centres. This can be seen from the maps of Ptolemy as well as from other Greek sources such as Ptolemy's chronicles and from the writings of strabo, Pliny and the book called Periplus of Erythrean Sea. Ptolemy lists six coastal cities in Tamil Nadu to which he appends the word 'Emporium' meaning an important trade centre. Three of these, as has already been mentioned, as Musiri, Korkai and Kaveripoompattinam were the chief ports of the three Southern kingdoms of the Cheras, Pandyas and Cholas. The literature of the Tamil People also corroborates this fact. Ptolemy has named two other cities in South India as 'metropolis' (similar to the modern meaning of the term), and six have been designated as 'mart'. Two others have been named 'city' and five more have been called 'towns'. His chronicles have also named fifty eight 'inland cities', as well as several other identifiable royal seats.

In excavations at a number of places, Indian archaeologists have found the results rather meagre and disappointing though the sources in literature would seem

to have been plentiful. It is possible to infer that many of the settlements referred to in Greek geographical and historical records were mainly built with wood. It follows that a substantial amount of construction in both mud and wood would have preceded the large brick structures which came in later and are in evidence from the second and the first century B.C. There are allusions in Sangam literature to the existence of substantial buildings. Houses were often built over the gates of a town as in Madurai, Kanchi.[381] A coastal town and more especially a busy port had high storeyed buildings as well as a tail light-house reached either by climbing a ladder or a staircase.[382] We also hear of towns having shops along the streets where many carts stood [383] There is mention of an old town having broad streets like a river.[384] But probably we are yet to find records which will enable us to strike at the right places and uncover such details as would prove in the coming years, that this was "A Golden Age of the Tamil Kingdom" as all records do evince.

The Urban Life of the Ancient Tamils

From Maduraikkanchi by Mankudi Maruthanar and which poem was addressed to the Pandyan Nedunchelian, the victor of the battle at Talaiyanankanam, we get a fairly detailed account of the life of the people residing at Madurai, on the Vaigai river. This account is also corroborated by hints gathered from Paripadal, another literary work of the Sangam age. Paripadal originally consisted of seventy verses of which 26 were devoted to the Vaigai river and four to the city of Madurai. There are no verges existing today about Madurai, yet from the remainder of the extent verses on various related topics, we are able to collect some information about this city and the life of the people therein. On the northern side of the city flowed the Vaigai river, having on its

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381 Ibid; 351 – 356.

382 Perumpanarruppadai, 319 – 324 and 446 – 45.

383 Narrinai 45.

384 Nedunal Vadai 29 – 30.

backs beautiful flower gardens and groves and orchards with coconuts and fruit bearing trees. There were Cherries or colonies of Panar, a type of a wandering minstrels. Sweet music resounded through these groves and the songs could continue in peace because of the deep moat which hampered the entry of aliens and enemies into the city proper. On the border and edge of the moat could be found the tall fortified city wall safeguarding it. This lengthy wall was interspersed with gateways through which passed a constant stream of people and traffic.

Inside the city, there would seem to have been broad roads flanked on either side by well planned, beautifully constructed and tastefully decorated houses of all sizes. The streets were generally crowded and noisy scenes were common as customers, both buyers and sellers, conversed in diverse languages. There was usually the sound of drums which announced the commencement of festivals, religious and otherwise, as well as the announcement of state and social functions. Quite naturally the bazars were full of shops that displayed varieties of goods, both indigenous and imported. A study of the records shows that the shops, houses and public buildings were more often than not decorated with flags, festoons and varieties of standards. These were generally for functions, celebrations, victories and parades. It was quite common, if rather awe, inspiring to hold victory marches and parades. The ancient Tamilians divided the day in a three fold manner. Morning was meant for philanthropic activities, the afternoon for business which led to material prosperity and the late evening was set aside for sensual pleasures. Generally in the evenings, middle aged and old women carried baskets and plates filled with sweet meats and fragrant flowers to soil. Most woman who had carefully dressed up for the evening generally bought them. Men accompanied by their family members strolled through the streets. Menfolk after relaxing in the late afternoons, usually wore fine cloths, buckled on their swords and donned rich upper garments as well as jewels and garlands. These rich people generally

moved about in their horse drawn chariots. These chariots had generally outriders, while proceeding through the thorough fares of the city.

Women in their eagerness to appear charming decorated themselves with a variety of cosmetics. Scent which was applied to their, bodies and garments and hair wafted through the streets. When the evening set in and the temple bells sounded, the women carrying flowers and incense and sometime accompanied by their menfolk and children, flocked to the various temples and Pallis to worship.

This characteristic of leisureliness as well as the pomp and pageantry of city life is well portrayed in Maduraikkanchi.

The streets of the bazar were a feast to the eyes. Some of the shops were open only during the night. They were known as Allankadi. But the majority of them transacted business during the day. There were yet other merchants who preferred to put their goods into boxes and peddle them from wealthy home to home. These merchants were dealing with rare and costly goods which could only be of interest to the noble and the elite. Quite naturally they were not interested in setting up shops in the bazaar which the bourgeois patronised. Yet in the bazaars there was such a variety of goods as boggles the imagination. There were dealers in gems, gold, jewels, textiles, copper vessels and other sundry things. These were kept to one side of the street. The incense and flower sellers were generally on the opposite side. There were other dealers who dealt with sandal paste, jack fruits, mangoes, different kinds of other fruits and vegetables, roots and even cooked food such as mutton and rice. As the evening came to an end and the night drew on, darkness slowly set in. Women in their rich homes prepared for the pleasures of the night. They had baths and adorned themselves with cotton clothes and chosen jewels after having smeared sandal paste on their bodies. They then settled down to sing some pans with musical instruments.

As the housewives did, so did the courtesans and harlots likewise got ready for the evening though their preparations were more elaborate since they had to arrest the attention of wealthy and youthful customers. Youngsters and youngmen indulged in heroic sports. They were accustomed to run and play in the street, and in cases made even elephants chase them. There were others who sang in chorus. Some pious women danced the Kuravai Kuttu to their hearts content, as a part of their worship to Lord Muruga. After some time they were accustomed to go to sleep. Late in the night the

streets were traversed by robbers as well as night guards who sought to keep the peace while maintaining a strict vigil. At the break of day and the dawn, Brahmins after morning ablutions chanted the Vedas. This was the call for the people of Madurai to rise in the morning. Women sprinkled water in the porticoes and cleaned the surroundings. The drums of the emples started beating heralding the sunrise. Let us see the picture presented by Paripadal about the river Vaigai and the life of the people at Madurai. The Vaigai was in spate. The whole city of Madurai joined as one man in celebrating the arrival of the new waters in the river as a result of heavy Tains. The celebrations took place in the full moon day. On that day the people of Madurai in their joyful mood went to the Vaigai in groups. Some went on elephants. Others were on horse back, still others rode chariots. The rest went on foot. They carried play things suited for the occasion such of floats of pith, Toy Chariots, short bamboo poles for squirting water on all. In the fresh waters, men and women of noble birth played for long hours, till their eyes became red. In between some women, after finishing the first round of playing in the water, came to the banks and took sips of wine.

Some other women, warmed their bodies by standing near hearths which were lit at intervals of space, in which incence was burnt. They applied sandal paste to their persons and afterwards donned garments, other women threw in the floods as offerings of thanks giving such as golden images of conch, crab and fish with a wish for the continued fertility of the land. Some others paid alms to the poor as a part of their celebrations. Till evening, people spent the day in a joyful mood. Then, they returned to the city. Women dressed once again in festive attire and flowers, sang songs in praise of the river, during their return journey. The King of the Pandyan country also joined with his people in this function. Just like Indra, the God or rains he enjoyed a dip in the Vaigai with his entourage, both male and female. Like the people in modern cities, in ancient times also the urban dwellers enjoyed holidays and picnic outings. The banks of the river Vaigai was a f'avouraite picnic spot, as also the small hillock of Parankwvu, where Lord

Muruga was enshrined. The people of Madurai used to trek on their way to Parankunru often. A trip to Parankunru refreshed them. Womenfolk worshipped the Lord for boons granted and supplication for those to be granted. Some people offered eatables to the monkeys and elephants. Others settled down to play with a variety of musical instruments and also sang along with them. Some others went into the halls where beautiful paintings were displayed. Some felt happy by collecting different kinds of flowers.

Paripadal also speaks about the dress and ornaments used by these urban people. Unlike the rural folk the city dwellers had access to thousands of varieties of costumes and ensembles. They were of different colours. Floral motifs were woven on them,[385] Women chose the kind of Sarees and custumes which suited them best. The saree was known as Puttagam.[386] As with dress, regarding ornaments, there was a fantastic range of jewels worn from head to toe by both sexes. Men wore finger rings and at the shoulders, an ornament called Vagnvalayam.[387] Women wore a head dress known as Talaik kolam which was studded with pearls.[388] Garland of pearls was a favourite ornament for the neck.[389] A wide variety of bangles is also mentioned. As ornaments for the hip, Kanchi and mekalai containing 2 to 32 strands were worn.[390] Silambu made of gold and pearl inserted was worn at the anklets.[391] The toes were also adorned with a kind of jewel.[392] The general picture of the urban life of the ancient Tamils as drawn from Sangam literature, corroborated by the writings of foreigners as

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385 Paripadal 12 : 93.

386 Paripadal 12 : 17.

387 Paripadal 14 : 97.

388 Paripadal 19 : 5.

389 Paripadal 9 : 19.

390 Paripadal 14 : 97.

391 Paripadal 22 : 49.

392 Paripadal 12 : 24.

well as archaeological finds, appears as one of gaiety, prosperity and perfection. In fine arts such as music and dance, ancient Tamils have reached a high water mark.

The ancient Tamil towns, men were busy, active, agile and materialistic in outlook, and knew how to enjoy life to the maximum. Like the modem Japanese, they believed in the hard work throughout the week and opted for complete relaxation after it was over. They were serious about their work, having evolved both a Philosophy as well-as a mode of action for each of their deeds. On the lighter side of life, they were given to drinking, eating, merry making and pleasure seeking. From different parts of the kingdom, income and luxurious goods poured into the cities. Men and women in the urban areas enjoyed a contented life and led a happy and prosperous life.

Status of Women in the Sanskrit Literature

Women have always played a significant role from time immemorial. When we go back to the earliest literary evidence on the role of women, we get a some what confusing picture. No desire is expressed anywhere in the entire range of Rig Veda, in any context, for a birth of a daughter. On the other hand, Atharvana Veda, deprecates the birth of a daughter.[393] The position gradually changed and certain rituals were prescribed for having a learned daughter, during the period of the Upanis-hads.[394] Manu, the law giver, in one place states that a women does not deserve freedom. In another context, Manu has observed that Gods will reside only in a place where women are honoured. Yagnavalkya has commented that those who seek the welfare of the country should always honour women.[395]

However, we find the women occupying an honourable position in the Vedic age. The Rig Vedic expression, "the wife is the home" shows how domestic life and

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393 Atharvana Veda, 6 : 11, 13 ; 8 : 6, 25

394 Brihat, Aranayaka Upanishad IV : 4, 18.

395 Yagnavalkya, Chs. 1 and 2 ; P 172.

sentiments centred round the women.[396] The women of the Rig Vedic age in particular, were well educated. They had every right to go out and to freely mingle with others in society and this provided the chance to select their counter-parts in life. They had even property-right and the right to inherit, to maintain and to give away as they pleased what they possessed. Her share in the ancestoral property was probably called as Sridhana. Widow remarriage was also permitted in the early Vedic Age. As a whole, the domestic life was happy and contented. "Nevertheless, the wife was dependent on man to a great extent even in that period, when women were kept comparatively in high honour".[397]

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396 Bhagavat Saran Upadhyaya, Women in Rig Veda, New Delhi, 1970, p. 3.

397 Ibid, p. 155.

Women in the Sangam Literature

Coming to the Sangam Age which is comparatively later in time, we get a vivid picture of the position and role of women from the Sangam Classics.

Everyday life of the young Girls

In contrast to the Aryan Society, the Tamil Society welcomed the birth of girls and we have ample references to prove it. We find a Cheiftain praying to God for the birth of a daughter.[398] In the Sangam Age, girls were fondly caressed and affectionately brought up by their parents.

They were allowed to go out freely. They took part in many kinds of sports and amusements. They used to pluck flowers[399] and make varieties of garlands. They loved to swim in tanks and rivers.[400] It was their pastime to play with a variety of balls[401] (Golden balls & Variya pandhu, Swinging on a pole suspended by ropes was another pastime of girls.[402] Preparing beaten rice was one of the household duties of the girls.[403] These not only reveal their rustic simplicity and their notable refinement but they also show how in ancient times, girls were in good health both in body and mind. Swimming, swinging, throwing bails and preparing beaten rice etc. made them fit to lead a healthy and happy family life.

Luminaries

But we do not hear of any educational institutions specially for the girls. However, the girls were given good training to live as virtuous, noble women. The girls

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398 Ibid, p. 3.

399 Patirruppattu, 29 : 1 – 2.

400 Kurinjikali, 3 : 1.

401 Puram 36 : 3 – 4, Narrinai 305 : 1.

402 Nar. 90.

403 Kruntokai, 238 : 1.

received their instructions from foster mothers and lady companions, This seems to be proved by the presence of more than 50 poetesses among the composers of the poems in the Sangam Literature. To mention a few, Avvaiyar, Ati-manthaiyar, Kakkaippadiniyar, Kavarpendu Kuramakal Elaveyiniar, Nakkannaiyar, Nanmullaiyar, Pari-magalir, Perumkoppendu, Peymakal claveyini, Vennikkuyattiyar and Vellivitiyar are some of the most distinguished women poets of the Sangam Age. Among them, Avvaiyar stands out preeminent for her poetic excellence and wisdom. Kakkaippadiniyar figures as a grammarian also and has to her credit two works on prosody, the Kakkaippadiniyar and Sirukakkaippatinlyam.

Artistic Talents of the Girls

Girls of the time were also well versed in the art of music. They were not only capable of singing melodiously, but were even able to make the elephants, which came to eat the well-grown millet crop on the field, to fall asleep.[404] The melodious tunes of the girls were even capable of melting the cruel hearts of the Maravars of the Palai tract, making them let loose their hunting weapons.[405] All these, will go to show that birth of daughters was welcomed and that the daughters were brought up with great care and that the girls had ample opportunity to go out and remain cheerful. But from the same Sangam collections, we have stray references to show that the independence enjoyed by the girls came to be curtailed, probably because of increasing Aryan influence. The girls were not allowed to go out alone in some cases and the girls were confined to the home in other cases. A poem from Nattrinai speaks of a girl who was sulking in her house without going out.[406] Another poem in Akan specifically states that girls after a certain age were not allowed to move about freely. A foster-mother openly tells her daughter that she had passed the stage of a Pethai and had attained the stage

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404 Akam. 102 : 5 - 9

405 Perunararruppadai, 21 - 22

406 Nar., 68 : 1 – 5.

of a Pethumbai as her tresses have grown longer and her teeth well formed. This makes it clear that the girls were not allowed to go out freely when they attained the stage of Pethumbai.[407] Though Sangam literature speaks of Kalavu, the practice of restricting the movement of the madden should have grown with the increasing influence of the Aryans. It is also likely that high class women were always under restrictions and were not allowed to freely move about.

Light of Life

Still the wife is glorified as the light of the house. She is referred to as Illal which means the "Governess of the household". Chastity, love, feminine patience, strength of mind, anxiety to entertain guests, and generosity were glorified as qualities of a housewife in the Sangam Age. Chastity is termed as "Karpu[1]'. According to Valluvar, nothing is more transcendent for a wife than the possession of chastity. Ilango Adigal has indicated that chastity is an absolute necessity for women. There are ample references to show that women of the age were noble, sincere and chaste. In Ainkurunuru, we get a picture which exemplifies the noble qualities of a wife. A newly married girl tells her companion that the water was indeed bad to drink in her husband's place as it was taken from a small pond, made dirty by the wallowing of cattle, but in spite of it, she liked the water even more than a mixture of milk and honey available in her parent's place[408]

Yet another impressive picture of the ideal wife we get from another Sangam work. The girl of a well to do family gets married and goes to her husband's place. Because of sudden misfortune that fell on her husband's family, the girl had to satisfy herself with a single meal for a day. Still she would not accept anything from her parents in order to maintain her husband's honour Here we find the wife maintaining the dignity

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407 Akam. 5.

408 Ainkurunuru, 203

of her family. The wife in the Sangam age considered it her supreme duty to receive and entertain the guests. They showed hospitality even in untimely hours.[409] Entertaining was considered as the sole privilege of the wife and men were not supposed to entertain the guests without her wives.

Women of the Warriors

The women of the Sangam Age were known for their courage and heroism- The heroism of woman was known as Mutin-mtdlai. We find from Purananuru interesting scenes of extraordinary courage displayed by women during times of war. But such qualities were to be seen only among certain warriors classes and we do not hear of any women taking part in warfare anywhere in the Sangam works.

Secondary Status of Women

Though the wife was considered as the light of the home and was honoured, it cannot be said that she was an equal partner in the household. In fact, she occupied a subordinate position in the household and it was generally accepted by the women of that age. They felt rather proud to call themselves as Illattalaivi under the mastership of their husbands. Social equality between the sexes does not seem to have been in vogue. It was clearly understood that the duties and the basic qualities of women are different from those of men. The etymology of the Tamil words Aan and Pen will exemplify the basic concept of the Tamils. "One who rules or possesses" is called as Aan and "One who is desired or sought after" is called as Pen. Thus the assignment of the active and mastery role to men and the passive and dependent role to women is basic in the ancient Tamils' attitude every question that concerned the sexes. The basic qualities assigned to man and woman by ancient grammarians also assign mastery behaviour to man and a retiring dispositions to woman. A verse from Kurunthogai exhibits the true dependent position of women in the age of the Sangam. A lady will always yearn for the

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409 Kurinjippattu, 202 - 203

graces of her husband even though he might indulge in acts of cruelty towards her as the child clings to the mother even when the mother beats the child.[410] In another instance, the girl's companion appeals to the husband of her friend to remain always attached to his wife even Song after she loses her physical charm.[411] This again is a clear proof of the dependence of the wife on her husband.

Theoretically the observance of a moral code was enjoined on men no less than on women. But there seems to have existed a wide gulf between theory and practice. In Tamilagam as in the rest of the world, man made laws and broke them with impunity. On the other hand, the wives lived with their husbands as dutiful wives discharging their domestic duties to the utmost sincerity and satisfaction. When their husbands were away, they pined in solitude and kept count of the days their husbands were away.

Widows

In the Sangam literature, we see stray references to Sati or Self-immolation of the wife. On the other hand, we find references to the widows and their plight. The widow was subjected to several inhibitions and restrictions. Soon after the death of her husband her hair was cut and she appeared with a shaven head. She had to satisfy herself with the simplest food and remain without any adornment.

Property Rights

In early Tamilagam, as the rest of India, women could not inherit property. As women themselves were treated as property, the question of their acquiring property independently did not arise. Whether she was a. queen or an ordinary woman, she did not seem to have owned property. Women were not recruited as soldiers, ministers or ambassadors. Of course, we hear of Avvaiyar's embassy to Kanchi from Takadur. But it seens to be a solitary instance. The chief queen of the King was called as koilal meaning

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[410] Kurunt. 397.

[411] Nar. 110.

the primary wife of the King. And there is no mention of women rulers nor women who were noted for making endowments as in later ages. We can infer that women of the Sangam Age had no right to inherit property, possess it or to dispose as she liked.

In this poor state, the widows had two courses opened to them. They had either to commit Sati or to lead a life of suffering. Perunkoppendu, the queen of the Pandya King who committed Sati speaks that her self-immolation was not a step in accordance with the prevalent custom ; on the other hand, she preferred to end her life in the funeral fire of her husband instead or subjecting herself to the miserable life of a widow. Though the women in general occupied a secondary place in the society in the Age of the Sangam, we have no instance of a lady being sold as a slave in contrast to the practice of selling women as slaves in ancient China as well as in Greece. It can be said in conclusion, that the role of women in the Sangam Age was a rather passive and dependent one and was confined to the four walls of the home.

CHAPTER - VI

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

Nothing is more characteristic of the society of the ancient Tamils during the Sangam period than the prominence given to education and literary pursuits in their public thought. That there was a lofty conception of education from the very early times of the Sangam era, seems fairly certain, when we consider the general level of culture mirrored in the literature, art and social and religious conditions of the times. The Tamil Society of the Sangam Age was an advanced and civilized society which had reached great heights in commercial prosperity and in the field of fine arts, and had a reasonable notion of the grandeur and responsibilities of Government and was in no way 'savage' or barborus. Education, which must beat the bottom of any secular or aesthetic achievement of any people, was not merely known and encouraged but was a

widespread social activity.[412] Many more scholars have asserted that the importance of education was realised by the Tamils as early as the Sangam age, that is nearly a thousand and eight hundred years ago.[413] It is amazing to note that the Tamil term kalvi corresponds to the universal connotation of the word 'Education' which means 'drawing out' of a child's latent potentialities. The Tamil equivalent of the Latin root word 'educare' is Kalluthal which has more or less the same meaning as 'drawing out'.[414] Emphasising the value of perpetual acquisition of knowledge, the great saint Thiruvalluvar holds that "knowledge increases as more and more is drawn from it like water from a well."[415] Thus the kural one of the earliest and the most impressive of the Sangam literatures underlines the absolute need for education and warns of the dangers of illiteracy in at least thirty stanzas. The fact fact that the chapter on learning and education is placed by Valluvar only next to the chapter on the glories of the King, is an eloquent testimony 06 the significance of education as a duty enjoined on the monarch. If the King himself is not learned, it is absurd to expect the subjects under his sceptre to be learned. Learning therefore, has the unique privilege and characteristic of benefiting everyone, irrespective of the fact whether the one who is learned, is the Prince or the Peasant.

The Value and Importance of Learning

The author of the immortal kural extols the value of learning in a few of his important precepts. He adds that the learned alone are said to possess eyes, while in respect of the unlettered ; the eyes are but sores.[416] Knowledge is the weapon which

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412 Subramanian, N., **Sangam Polity,** Bombay, 1966, p. 324.

413 Pillai, K.K., A Social **History of the Tamils,** Vol. I Madras, 1975, p. 394.

414 The term education is derived from the Latin word Educare, which means 'to draw out, to elicit'

415 Kural 396 from Chapter 40 'On Learning'.

416 Kural : 393.

saves one from evil ; it forms the rampart which cannot be destroyed by the foe.[417] The learned possess everything, while the unlettered are really poor even if they have riches.[418] Learning is the only imperishable wealth[419] The learned are honoured not only in their own native land, but all over the world. What has been learnt most systematically should always be put into practice in one's everyday life. Thiruvalluvar, nevertheless, laid special emphasis on the value of acquiring knowledge through listening to the wise. Knowledge received through the ear was considered even superior to mere 'book-learning'. The Kural says that those who feast their ears with learning are comparable to the venerable people who make sacrificial offerings[420]. Knowledge acquired through listening will stand one in good stead in his moments of gloom. Even the high born, if they are ignorant, sink low in the scale, while the learned, even of humble birth, are exalted. All these wise sayings of Thiruvalluvar bear evidence to the conclusion that Valluvar addressed these axioms not only to the Kings but to the commoners as well.

Nature of Education and Learning in the Sangam Age

The Sangam people were keen on acquiring such knowledge as deserved to be acquired; acquisition of knowledge, of course, was not the end of education. One who had acquired any knowledge worth the name must live up to the ideals held a loft by that learning or knowledge. Again, knowledge in the Sangam period was understood to be of two kinds : that is the knowledge of Humanities and the knowledge of Sciences. The Humanities was represented by the study of languages and literature and the Sciences by Mathematics. The two branches of knowledge are spoken of by Valluvar as the two eyes of a rational being. The sense of discrimination of right from wrong in a

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[417] Ibid; 421.

[418] Ibid; 430.

[419] Ibid; 400.

[420] Ibid 397, 391, 415

person grows only if he is learned. Our ancient people even regarded the unlearned devoid of all human qualities. ''Without education what is man? a splendid slave, a reasoning savage.[421] Ignorant men differ from beasts only in their figure[422] The pattern of education in the Sangam period was not merely reading and understanding of books, but listening to learned persons; for it was rightly believed that by listening to the wise words of the learned men one derives not only knowledge but the fruits of that learned person's ripe experiences as well. Moreover, the large body of poems produced by nearly five hundred poets and cholars belonging to different classes of people during the Sangam Age indicates that education must have had a fairly wide popularity.[423] It is gratifying to note that during the Sangam period not only the upper strata of the society like the Kings, priests and merchants, but even the peasants, Kuravars, Maravars and shepherds had the facilities for learning. Again, professionals like the Kulavanikan, Aruvai Vanikan, Maruthuvan, Anniyan, Kolan, Vannakkan and others had the talents for poetry.

Among the women, Perunkopendu, the queen of Buthapandian, Pariakalir were poetesses of extraordinary merit. Women from the hunter, watcher and potter classes were learned women. Poetess Kakkaipadiniar composed excellent works on prosody. Similarly, the celebrated Avvaiyyar who hailed from the class of inistreis. Panar, a respected scholar, was the poetess laureate of the Atikaman of Thakadur and the ambassador to the court of the Thondaiman of Kanchi. She was fearless and bold as to go into the pitch of the battle and advise the Kings.[424] This Kind of educational activity continued, steadily in the post-Sangam age also. It is to be pointed out with satisfaction that education was common for all, men and women, rich and poor, Kings and

[421] Balasubramanian, K.M., Thirukkural, English Translation, Notes to Chapter 40.

[422] Ibid

[423] Pillai, K.K., A Social Life of the Tamils, op. cit., p. 396.

[424] Ramanathan Chettiar, SangakalaTamilar Valvu, Madras, 1980, pp. 42 - 44

commoners, high-born and low born. That being so, is it most regrettable that many weak sections of the society today like the Gypsies and other tribal classes are away from human civilization and a grean mass of our brethren have not tasted so far the benefits of education?

Aims and Objectives of Education in the Sangam Age

It is noted that education of a secular nature was not the peculiar preserve of any particular community or caste, sex or station in life. The Sangam scholars, whose poems are practically the only worthwhile source of information for knowledge of the Sangam period, include representatives of practically all classes. It was believed that education gave a certain self-confidence and dignity to man and so it was sought after passionately. Scholars opine that probably that one inducement to learning in the Sangam days could have been the great honour in which learned men were held. Earning of money was not considered as the end of education in those days by our fore fathers. Otherwise how could they have regarded learning as the wealth 'par excellence'. Learning did not consist of the mere acquisition of knowledge and accumulation of related information. Education was taken seriously as a preparation for life.[425] People learned how to live, by living with their kith and kin. Mere bookish or theoretical education was not considered to be real knowledge. Education for our ancient people was an integrated process, a total development of all the faculties of the learner, namely his physical, mental and moral qualities. This kind of education did not signify mere growth of knowledge for our people, but a value of practical importance and a slow unfolding of the individual in all his grandeur and beauty. Since education

[425] Meenakshisundaram, T.P. **Kalvichchinthanaikal,** Madras, 1965, P. 12

ultimately meant living after having learnt how to live, our great saints like Valluvar advocated learning as a continuous process till one's death[426].

Since Man is essentially a dependent social being, education might be termed as the initiation of the learner into the society. Education is more than the developing of specific branches of knowledge such as science or history, or even morality or religion: it signifies an initiation in to a highly developed and complex understanding of reality. Hence education includes also, apart from the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the various subjects, an initiation into the culture which endeavours to see things as they are, to lead to knowledge of the universal order. Valluvar comes very close to this objective of education when he pronounces that those who have not learnt to respect this universal order have not learnt anything at all. An individual benefits from the development of his faculties; and anything that enlarges his opportunities to participate in the life and culture of his nation and of the world, enriches him personally.

In the broad sense of the term therefore education, in the early days for the Tamils, meant the development of knowledge and skills as well as cultivating altitudes towards life in all its aspects. The development of such attitudes in relation to the society and the world in which one lives may be referred to as culture. This clearly shows that then our ancestors clearly distinguished between formal education, in the narrow sense, often referred to as schooling, and education in the broad sense as formation of man as a person and member of the society. Schools alone did not possess the monopoly in the field of education in a world whose collective pulls and pushes become even more important.

Education in the ancient times was considered as a key to the social and economic progress of the society. Learning was not only for knowledge sake or attaining honour and glory. The learning of our people set right this practical experience

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[426] Kural, 397.

and social relations. Culture, which is the end-product of education was moulded in tune with these social surroundings. Valluvar had this social function of education in mind, when he insisted on the King being a learned man like the subjects. It was considered to be one of the lofty aims of eduction that one must live upto the ideals suggested by that learning or knowledge. A person must fulfill successfully the obligations by virtue of his learning when he is able to rise to the expectations of the society and the world in which he is destined to live, according to the great norms of his knowledge, than he is indeed the most successful member of the society. Such a life benefits and illumines other lives around him.

All these objectives of the ancient education apart, the primary motive of the Tamils of the Sangam period appears from the evidence to be of a moral and ethical nature. What is most to be noted in the nature of the early education of the Tamil people was essentially religious and other worldly. Kural in the very early chapters brings forth this great ideal saying that the ultimate end of all education is to adore the sacred feet of the Almighty.[427] A righteous life is symbolised in the worship of the supreme reality permeated the Tamil system of learning and everything was subordinated to it. A moral and upright life was the raison detre of all knowledge. Love and fear of God become the beginning of wisdom with our people. The education of the ancient Tamils had two good features which we have since all but lost; it gave the first place to religion and is was a personal discipleship of the pupil to the teacher.

Education was taken as a tool that fostered morality and character. If beauty and wisdom must have a place in human thought the latter must be firmly rooted on a moral foundation. Learning was like a garden to our ancestors where they cultivated virute and good qualities. The future of any society would naturally depend on the motivation and sense of values the individual makes; what knowledge and skills sought to be

[427] Ibid, 2

acquired by the ancient Tamils were balanced with the values and insights associated with ethics and religion at its best, namely a search for the knowledge of self, of the meaning of life, of the relationship to other human beings, and to the ultimate reality.

Education As The Duty of the Parents

It is remarkable to note that parents in the Sangara period attached great importance to the education of their children. The society enjoined the primary responsibilities of educating the children or their parents. This aspect of our ancient education corresponds to the modern view that the parents who have given life to their children have the great obligation to see to their education. The parent are the first and the chief educators. A poem in the Purananuru collection states that it is the duty of the father to educate and thereby enable his son.[428] Home is the first school of social virtue that every society needs. Among the Tamils, the home provided a suitable atmosphere for the development of knoweledge and character. While the father considered the provision of learning to his sons as his duty, the mother inculcated among her children both by precept and by example certain virtues like courage and generosity The mother's ambition too, was to make the son great .The Kural says that "a mother's joy when she hoar of her son's greatness transcends that at his birth."[429] That the children also did not spare the failing parents is evident from the curse hurled at a father by his son who had failed to educate him.[430] However, although, the family had the first duty of imparting education, it needs the help of the whole community. One of the tasks of the civil society was the promotion of education of the youth. Education is also a service to the nation. It is hence the duty of the State, or as our ancestors believed, of the Sovereign to provide for education as an instrument for the common good of the community. Our people of the Sangam era had realised that public instruction would provide the opportunities for all to enjoy freedom well and to lead a decent human life, liberated from hunger, ignorance and poverty.

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[428] Puram 312 Saanronakkutal Thanthaikku Kadane which means that it is the duty of the father to make his son virtuous and learned.

[429] Kural : 69, Cf. Pillai K.K. A Social Life of the Tamils, **op. cit.** p.396 – 397.

[430] "Js;spj; jphpfpd;w gUtj;jpy; ve;jd; JLf;flf;fpg; gs;spf;F itj;jpiyNa je;ijahfpa ghjfh!"

Schools and the Process of Learning

The education of those days was different from what it is now. Today we have huge educational institutions with thousands of students on the rolls and employing hundreds of teachers, housed in specious mansions with the knowledge acquired in these places being tested in periodical examinations conducted by the Government. The range of knowledge and the subjects taught and learnt in those days were definitely limited.[431] Though the education which prevailed in the Sangam age was of a general nature, the system of instruction varied for men and women. Men were instructed in such subjects as making money, arts of war and administration, while women had a thorough grounding in family education. However both sexes were well trained in literary and artistic pursuits.[432] Even among women, in spite of the fact that we hear of a few poetesses, it could not have been as many as those among men.

The traditional 'pial' schools called pallis were conducted by individual teachers.[433] Sometimes pupils lived in public rest-houses like the manrams which seem to have served as schools. Some scholars assert that every village in ancient Thamilagam had primary schools for the young scholars.[434] However, information regarding the number of schools in each village or the number of pupils who attended each school is lacking According to K. K. Pillai, 'it was not likely that cities in the Sangam age or in the epoch immediately succeeding it, schools existed in all the different physiocratic regions of Thamilagam. The 'Kurinchi', the 'Paalai' and the 'Neydal' could not have had many schools".[435] The student who wrote on dried and cut palm leaf bits used in long narrow

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431 Subramanian, N. op.cit., p. 327

432 Muthukrishina Nattar, C., Palanthamilar Panbu, Madras, 1954, p. 38 - 39

433 The Pial was the "Thinnai' or the platform like the verandah of the house. In certain cases perhaps, sheds or covered shelters were set up near the teacher's house. Cf. K.K. Pillay, The Social History of the Tamils, op. cit. p. 397.

434 Ibid; p. 397

435 The reference to working on palm leaves is found in 'Naladiar'

strips usually 1" x 2". These were punched either at one end or at both ends and held together by tying them into a paginated bundle with strong strings. The entire bundle of such sheets were bound together between two thick planks of the same dimensions. These leaves were called Olai and the bundle of leaves was a Suvadi. The pen was a kind of a long and sharpened but thick needle attached to a wooden handle. It was called an eluthani literally meaning writing-sail or Uci a stylus. Holding this pointed pen between the fingers and gripping it tightly with the thumb, the pupils wrote on the dried leaves. "One side of the leaf was used for writing. As it was not possible to erase or overwrite or alter anything that was written on such a surface, the scribes took great care to avoid clerical errors. For the same reason, once they crept in, they persisted.[436] Probably from tins practice rose the saying that the one who wrote the leaf carelessly spoiled it.[437] Sometimes gifts of such Suvadis and writing stylus, along with food and clothing were made to the pupils and such magnificient acts were greatly appreciated by the society. The initial training for the youngsters in the art of writing was provided by making them write on sand spread on the floor. These practices of writing were in vogue even in the nineteenth century. A Jesuit missionary records in 1839 what he saw in the schools of Tamilnadu. You see here children writing with their finger on sand, the letter or the word which is dictated, to them. When the space is filled up with this working, they pass their hand very genuy on the sand and it is like a leaf turned over, ready to receive new writing. To make up their books, the Indians do not use paper; they take the leaf of the palm-tree on which they engrave the letter with a stylus (Eluihani) and they do it with dexterity and a speed which is impossible for a European to imitate.[438]

Education, no doubt, was the privilege enjoyed by certain classes of people only. Nevertheless the Tamils of old seemed to have appreciated the importance of

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[436] Pada verupadu (Different Readings)

[437] The popular saying even now is Eluthinavan Ettai Keduthan.

[438] Letter of Fr. Garnier, G., S.J., dated 1839, Trichinopoly, Letters Edifiantes et Curieuses, Vol. 1, p.143- 160

commencing education at an early age. Learn while young is a well-known maxim of Avvaiyar. Another Sangam classic warns that it is a mistake not to learn while young, because what is learnt while young is like writing on a rock.[439] It is learnt from the Jivaga Sinthamani that the sons of Jivaga were sent to school at the age of five to learn the arts. Though the rich had always the advantage over the poor in the matter of education, since they could afford it, the poor too could render service to the teacher and thereby get the benefit of education. The Pandya ruler Ariyappadaikadanta Nedumchezhian advised his people to take to learning either by giving all they have to the teacher or by rendering service to him. According to him if a man from a low status were better educated, even the well-todo people could learn from him and thereby the barriers of class would crumble. Perhaps our ancestors had realised that "art is long and life is fleeting." Hence the emphasis on early education. Education was considered as a personal and family-like process. It was a personal discipleship of the pupil to the teacher. Tha young scholars who attended the elementary schools in the Sangam age were called Maiyadal mazhapulavar in a poem in Paripadal. Similarly the teacher of the primary school was known as llampalarsiriar.[440] Education did not stop with the student level. It was a common practice in those days for married people to migrate to other places in search of knowledge. Such separation from the family with a view to get higher education as described as Othalpirivu in the Akam literature.

The Place and the Function of the Teacher

The importance of each village having a teacher was recognised by the author of the Thiukadikam.[441] The teacher was known as the Kanakkayar. That is, he

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[439] Nanmanikkadigai : 91.

[440] Madurai Ilampalsiriar Sathan Koothanar who was a poet of the Sangam Age, must have been a teacher of the primary school. Nattrinai – 322 and Akam – 273.

[441] Tirikadukam, 10. This poem lists the qualities of a good teacher. Df also Sirupanchamulam ; 29. It was pointed out in these poems that a town without a Kanakkayar would go to runs.

who collected a group of students and taught them the Nedunkanakku which was the literature and grammar based on the alphabets. There were a. few Kanakkayars in the Sangam age like poet Nakkiranar's father Asiriar, Asan & 'Uvattiyayar were also other appelations of a teacher. Asiriar or Asan also denoted experts of particular arts like music and dance.[442] Probably the teacher of a large number of pupils was known as Kulapati. It is stated that Kidangit Kulapati Nakkannanar, of Kuruntogai fame taught more than a thousand pupils.[443] It is clear that there was a distinction between teachers of the young and the teachers of higher learning. The teacher was paid either in cash or in kind by the students.[444] The ideal student was a dependable assistant or help to the teacher in times of emergency or danger. He gave much wealth to the teacher, for whom he performed odd service also. He never felt it below his dignity to worship his teacher. Corporal punishment inflicted by the teacher on the student was not objected to.[445]

Students were but the personal disciples of the teacher and it was enjoined upon the students to begin their education with the teacher. In the Sangam Age, the teacher was entrusted with the shaping of the students. Even if the students neglected eating at home, the complaint was taken by the mother to the teacher.[446] The teacher had to live with his pupils, talking and listening to them, observing and being observed by them, encouraging and praising, scolding and punishing them. Since earning a living had not yet become the principal goal of education, the less business-like but certainly more scientific attitude had salutary effects, on the education of the young minds. The great teacher was always considered as the noble soul who had understood that he was the

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442 Manimegalai VI : 42; Silappadikaram 3 : 25.

443 Kuruntogai : 199.

444 Puram : 183.

445 Subramanian, N., **op. cit.,** P. 326.

446 Meenakshisundaran, T.P. **op. cit.,** p. 16.

parent of the children in perhaps a truer sense than their physical parents. He taught less by what he said in the classroom or even out of it than by what he was. For at all times and in all places he was followed by pairs of hero-worshipping eyes and ears. Posts and masters of learning seem to have bad disciples whom they trained well.[447] The teacher was held in esteem by the pupils as well as by others. The Tamil family put him alongside God, the parents as worthy objects of veneration. It will not be out of date to quote here the words of a modern educationist.

''Whatever may have changed in the course of over two thousand years of our heritage, one factor has remained in tact that the Indian child had to be educated by a person he loves and admires, that he is attached to a guru rather than to an institution. The key to India's rise or fall is in the humble and all but unseen hand of teacher.[448] How aptly these words apply to the teacher of the Sangam age and the system of education that was the glory of those days,

Curriculum and the Subjects Taught

The studies undergone in the primary and higher levels by the people of the Sangam Age are an impressive list and they constitute a fairly comprehensive curriculum. In the 'Pial' schools a basic grounding in language and literature as well as in Arithmetic was provided. The alphabet was known as nedunkanakku and perhaps that was the reason why teachers were called Kanakkayars. The student wrote but sparingly and got practically everything by heart. Training of the memory, the cultivation of the ability to reproduce thousands of verses by rote and even verbatim repeat every expression that came from the teacher, were some preliminary requisites for an ideal student. The remarkable memory of the students of those days was largely responsible

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[447] Marokottu Nappasalaiyar makes mention of her revered teacher, Kapilar, the famous poet, while Kapilar himself had received training under a distinguished master – Cf. Venkatasamy Nattar : Kapilar 1921, p.30

[448] Sinqueira, T.N. S. J. **Modern Indian Education,** Madras, 1960, p. 264

for the preservation of the large amount of literary productions of that age, considering the poor writing aids they had.

Mathematics, which was described as ennui comprised the science of measuring time, place and substance. To denote fractions terms like kani and mundri were used.[449] Minute fractions were represented by measurements like immi, anu, mummi and kunam. Similarly multiples of large numbers were expressed in terms of kodi[450] and mini ayiram[451] while Sangam[452] and tamarai,[453] neithal,[454] kuvalo, kamalam[455] ambal[456] and vellam[457] signified a huge number in general. Obviously they represented figures higher than a crore or kodi. There are references to units of measurement like nali[458] Tuni[459] and Padakku.[460] Weights of linear measurement such as Katam and Yocanai also occured in the Sangam works.[461]

Higher learning, particularly pertaining to religion was a monopoly of the Brahmins; Vedic lore, the Sutras, the Upanis-hads, the epics and Dharma Sastras must have been taught to the Brahmins by learned teachers. Higher education, no doubt, was governmed by the prevalent social stratification. Parimelalakar speaks of a mathematical treatise known as Emmbam.[462] As is testified from certain poems in the

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449 Naladi : 346 – 3.

450 Kural : 337, 639.

451 Tolkappiyam, Eluttu, 471.

452 Paripadal : 2 : 13.

453 Tirumurugattupadai : 164.

454 Paripadal : 2 : 13.

455 Ibid.

456 Ibid.

457 Maduraikkanchi : 22.

458 Puram : 189 : 5.

459 Nattrinai : 16 : 7.

460 Tolkappiyam, Eluttu : 240.

461 Silappadikaram : V : 133.

462 Poem 229 of Puram by Kudalur Kilar.

Purananuru collection, the early Tamils had acquired a basic knowledge of astrology. The poem 299 refers to an incident how the people of the Chera country had predicted the death of their King by the changes in the celestial bodies[463] The astrological knowledge of our people then seems to have been based on an empirical study of astronomy and the movement of the stars. The fishermen and the agriculturist made use of the knowledge of the movements of the planets and the seasonal fluctuations.

The ancient Tamils possessed fairly advanced practical knowledge of astronomy even before they came under the North Indian influences.[464] The familiar circle of twelve years for dome, stic events among the Tamils was an independent South Indian system. Uraiyur Muthukannan Sathanar's exposition of the relations between the sun, wind and the sky is found in a poem in the Sangam classics.[465] Experts were familiar with the knowledge of the stars. They called the stars as Meenkal and the planets as Kols. The fact that the astronomical vocabulary consisted of pure Tamil words in the Sangam Age is an indication that astronomy was developed as an independent branch of learning by the Tamils. The early Tamils had knowledge of the year which they classified as Kar, Kutir, munpani, ilavenil and thutuvenil. The duration of the day too was divided into six parts according to the variations in temperature. The days of the week were known by different names. The month was known as thingal and the year as Yandu. The directions calculated on the basis of the corners of the sky were called Ticai and the heavenly protectors of the sky were described as Tisai Kappor.[466] The day of 24 hours was divided into sixty Nalikais. The Nalikai-Kanakkar employed a kind of hour-glass called Nalikai-Vattil to denote the time. The geographical knowledge of the Tamils was

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[463] This work studied the science of Mathematics in two parts classified as Karuvi and Seigai.

[464] Sreenivasa Iyengar, M., Tamil Studies Madras, 1914, pp. 192 – 193.

[465] Puram : 30.

[466] Pairpadal : 8 : 7.

sound. They referred to the Himalayas as Vadaperumkal. The Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea were denoted as Kunakadal and kudakadal respectively.

The science and practice of the fine arts were highly developed among the Ancient Tamils. The study of music was an essential part of the liberal education; and the Tamils excelled in soft melodies which had a gentle and soothing effect. The gamut consisted of seven notes which were named Tharam, Ulai, kural, Ili, Thutham, Vilari, and Kaikkilai.[467] Though the principal tunes were classified as Palai, Kurinjhi, Marutham and Cevvali, each tune had many variations making, in all 103 distinct tunes which were recognised in the musical treatises of the period.[468] Musical instruments of various types are described and it included many kinds of yals and varieties of drums. Karikala was called the Master of the Seven notes of Music.[469] The flats which had eight holes in it was capable of considerable modulation.

Dancing was cultivated as a fine art and text-books were already composed in which rules were given in detail for the performance of several kinds of dancing in vogue. There were two traditions of kuttu. They were Tamil and Aryan. There were kuravai dances in which seven, eight or nine persons danced together, standing in a ring and clasping each other's hands.[470] Viralis sometimes danced at night by torch light and particular transposes of the hands are mentioned by name in the Natya Sashtra of Bharatha. There were mixed dances in which both men and women look part.[471] The education of an actress commenced as early as her fifth year and continued for seven

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467 Silappadikaram : V : 42.

468 Kanagasabhai, op.cit., p.126.

469 Silappadikaram : VII : 10.

470 Kanagasabhai, V. op. cit. p. 127.

471 Neelakanta Sasthri, A History of South Intia, op. cit., p. 138.

years. The curriculum of her study as given in the ancient classics included a variety of subjects.[472]

For the instruction of the various subjects, the mother tongue was used as the medium. It was the most natural vehicle to express thoughts and feelings. But the script employed during the period of the study has been a subject of controversy. Epigraphists hold that the Tamil Script including the earlier form of Vattelultu, was derived from Brahmi. The other view is that the Tamil script has evolved from Vattetuttu which was of indigenous origin in the Tamil country itself and that which is neither derived from the Brahmi nor from Grantha.[473] Students had to get by heart dictionaries like the Nikandus. The ancient Tamils also studied about agriculture, and world history, which they called Thonmai. The science of Economics which they called Porulpurinul was known to them. They were conversant with the barter system as a medium of exchange. There were well-known works on paintings, sculpture and medicine.[474] Drama along-with literature and music formed the Muthamil. The Sangam was an academy of scholars and poets and not a teaching institution.

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472 Manimegalai: 2 : 18 : 31.

473 Pillay, K.K., op. cit., p. 400.

474 Kural : On medicine : (ch. 95) Palai : 16

Conclusion

This short and sketchy survey of the education of the ancient Tamils during the Sangam period and its role, gives the impression that the standard of the studies then must have been high indeed. Education in the Sangam Era has a long and eventful history. It is a matter of pride that our forefathers valued education very preciously and made all provisions with their power for the dissemination of knowledge. Opportunity for the acquisition of knowledge were fairly common, if could base our conclusions on the variety of the classes people who constituted the brilliant galaxy of the hundred poets and scholars, both men and women, high and low.

It is again an extraordinary achievement of our ancestors-that they attached a special function to education namely, its role as an instrument of liberation. Possession of knowledge was an acknowledged leveler of all irrelevant distinctions in society. The learned could always emancipate themselves from ignorance, want, humiliation and oppressions. Knowledge and learning moreover played the useful role of unifying the people. The learned men rose above sectarian narrow-mindedness and transcended all man-made barriers. For the truly learned, every place was their own country. They were the real citizens of the world. The Tamils of the Sangam Age held aloft before all the world the beacon light of education and learning as the royal road to universal brotherhood. This was indeed a modern concept which our great ancestors have held and practised two thousand years ago.

The role of education as a medium of change and an instrument of the development of the society was recognised by our people long ago. The sole purpose of education seemed to be training the young men and women for character and ability that they should take their rightful place in the society, Committed to the progress of the people the learned men of the Sangam epoch played a vital role of

creating a common citizenship and a common culture. They unconciously contributed to the process of social and cultural integration. By enriching the human personality and training the person in the fundamental values, education of the ancient Tamils played a creative role in the total development of human personality. Our ancient education stressed the humanistic reflections and developed a sense of responsibility in the youth of the day. OUT ancient education thus created conditions for the better life of the individual and the society. Respect for the freedom and dignity of the person was keynote of our educational system which did not neglect the emphasis on a moral life and social responsibilities.

The concepts like basic education, family education vocational education, perpetual drawing out of knowledge, universal education, education for life and such ideas, as expounded by Valluvar and other masterminds of the Sangam Age come very close to modern ideals of education and the pedagogical methods and such things have been foretold long ago by our great forefathers. When we ponder a little that the gems of wisdom belong to two thousand years ago we are bewildered at the penetrating vision, the profound wisdom and the foresight of the Tamils who lived in the Sangam Age, which was indeed the 'Golden Age of Tamil Culture and Civilization'.

CHAPTER - VII

RELIGIOUS LIFE AND FESTIVALS

The Tamils of the Sangam Age seems to have fashioned for themselves a society where religion did play a dominant role and considerably influenced individual and social thinking and beliefs but was not allowed to seriously tamper with the very practical and worldly life which they chose to live".[475] Most of the Sangam literature is

[475] Subramanian N., **Sangam Polity,** op.cit., p. 363.

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475 Subramanian N., **Sangam Polity,** op.cit., p. 363.

secular. Indeed no specialist religious treatise appeared during the Sangam period. Nevertheless, a study of that literature in its entirety reveals the belief of the ancient Tamils in God and the contemporaneous religious milieu. The indispensability of that literature as the main, if not the only, source for the religious history of the ancient Tamil country is no exaggeration. Examination of the entire corpus of that literature is indispensable to get the clear and true picture of Vaishnavism in the Sangam Age.

The antiquity of the worship of Tirumal (Vishnu)[476] in the Tamil land is traceable at least to the Sangam period. Although the terms Vishnu and Vaishnavism[477] as such were not in Tamil literary use then. Sharp differences persist among the scholars in determining the origin of Vaishnavism. According to B.V. Ramanujam, Vaishnavism must be traced to the Vedas since the measuring of the universe is mentioned in the Rig Veda.[478] Gopika Mohan Bhattacharya is of the view that Vasudeva cult arose in Mathura in the pre-Christian centuries as a reaction against Jainism and Buddhism and that Vasudeva was gradually identified with Vishnu and Narayana.[479] The Vasudeva Cult of North India must have spread to the Tamil country via the Maratha land, says R.C. Bhandarkar.[480] The view that the cult of Vishnu or Tirumaliyam was Tamil in its origin is also posited.[481] This is diametrically opposite to the Vedic, northern and Sanskrit origin of the cult of Vishnu. It is said that the Sanskrit word Vishnu was derived from Tamil

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476 "While Saivism in its primitive lineaments could be traced back to the Sangam Age, Vaishnavism apart from the worship of Tirumal is not detectable in the Sangam lilterature" Subrahmanian N., **Sangam Polity,** p. 376.

477 "The term Vaishnava is of rather late origin, and occurs for the first time in the last parvan of the Mahabharata" Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya, Evolution of Hindu Sects, Calcutta, 1975, pp. 24-25.

478 Ramanujam B.V., History of Vaishnavism in South India Upto Ramanuja, Madras, p. 120.

479 Gopika Mohan Bhattacharya, Vaishnava Literature, Calcutta, 1975, p. 107.

480 Bhandarkar R.G., Vaishnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems, Strass burg, 1913, p.68 (in The collected hastens to add that there is no evidence to show at what time it was introduced into the Tamil land" Yet he says (in p. 70), "The earliest Alvars may be placed before about the fifth or sixth century, but there is nothing to show that Vaishnavism had not penetrated to the Tamil country earlier, i.e., about the first century"

481 Datchinamurthi A., **Tamilar Nagarigamum Panpadum,** p.283.

Vindu.[482] Mayilai Sceni Venkatasami is convinced that the Aryans assimilated the Tamil Tirumal (Mayon) with their own Vishnu.[483] The sports of Kannan and Nappinnai lend support to the view that the Tamils had their own tradition which possibly led to the Tamil influence upon the Sanskrit works like the Harivamsa and the Bhagavata. At the same time, the entry of anecdotes connected with Vishnu's incarnations into the Sangam works indicates the northern influence over the South. The position is aptly presented by N. Subrahmanian thus: "An analysis of the Indian Gods makes one thing clear. There seem to be parallel names in Tamil and in Sanskrit for the same gods: Murugan and Subrahmanya, Tirumal and Vishnu, Siva and Rudra; this seems to resemble the Venus Aphrodite, Hercules-Heracles, Ulysses-Odysseus, Jupiter-zeus parallel names in Latin and Greek. Much accommodation between indigenous religious practices and exotic Aryan beliefs and rituals seems to have taken place.[484]

The terminology Kadal Vanan Puranam[485] truly indicates the antiquity of Tirumal. Other than Tirumal, rods like Siva (the three-eyed god), Murugan, Valiyon (Balarama) and Indra seem to have been important and worshipped ritualistically. Tirumal and Baladava (BalarSma) were the Two.[486] These Two were the two great gods.[487] So also Tirumal and Siva, whose combination being the mixture of blue and red.[488] The

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482 Ibid., p.284. To state that the Sanskrit word Vishnu has no root in that language is a misconception. The root for Vishnu in Sanskrit is Vish which means "to pervade" pervasiveness is a special characteristic of Vishnu as a deity.

483 Mayilai Seeni Venkatasami, **Palantamilum Palvagai Samayamum,** Madras, 1974, p.26.

484 Subrahmanian N., Sangam Polity, op.cit., p. 371. Nilakanta Sastri K.A., observes, "All over India the foundations of Indian Culture were laid by the fusion of Indo-Aryan and pre Aryan elements in varying conditions and proportions and in the languages literatures and institutions of the South, there has survived much more of pre-Aryan India than anywhere else" (A History of South India, p. 2)

485 Manimekalai XVII : 98. That terminology does not mean the Vishnu Purana. C. Balasubramanian is misled when he states, "The Manimekalai, a Buddhist Kavya, refers to the Purnas about Lord Narayana : for example the Vishnu Purana" [A Study of the Literature of the Chera Country (upto 11th century A.D) p. 210].

486 Paripadal, 15 :66.

487 Purnanuru, 58:16.

488 Ahananuru, 166 : 7; 360:6.

Muvar[489] were the three popular gods, namely Ayan, Ari and Aran. Then Tirumal, Baladeva, Siva and Murugan were the Four.[490] However, Balarama, Parudi, Kaman, Saman and Siva were the Five.[491]

Tirumal's Names

"There was in vogue a conventional classification of the landscape of the Tamil country into five regions each being presided over by its special deity".[492] Accordingly, Mayon, the bucolic deity, was the main god of the Mullai (pastoral) region.[493] To the ancient Tamils Vishnu (Tirumal) was Mayon.[494] Ma, in Tamil, means black (dark) colour. It denotes both Tirumal and the bee.[495] Mayon is usually compared with anything that is dark, dark-blue, blue or black such as the Kaya flower (Memecylon edule or Malabarica), blue gem (sapphire), sea, water-borne cloud, darkness, lotus leaf, hill blue lily and so on. For instance, the Tolkappiyam mentions Mayon's complexion as dark-blue like that of the Kaya (Puvai) flower.[496] Mayan is Mayan.[497] Mayavan (Tirumal)[498] another derivation from Ma, but not from Mayam (magic). Mayavan is

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489 Tirumurugarruppadai 162. However Muvar in certain other contexts may mean Chera, Chola and Pandya the three crowned monarchs of Tamilagam (Perumbanarruppadai 33 and Porunararruppadai 54)

490 Purnanuru 56:10

491 Kalittogai 26:6 (Anantarama Aiyar edition Vol. I, Nachchinarkkiniyar's Commentary and the editor's foot note, pp. 143-144)

492 Nilakanta Sastri K.A., Development of Religion in South India, Bombay1963, p. 4. N. Subrahmanian observes that the way of life of the ancient Tamils depended upon this basic factor [History of Tamilnadu (1336 A.D) Madurai, 1972, p. 38]

493 Tol Porul Sutram 5. For other regions, Seyon or Murugan (Kurinji or hill tract) Vendan or Indra (Marudam or farm land) Taruna (Neydal or the littoral) and Korrvali (Palai or desert) were the presiding deities. Nachchinarkkiniyar, the commentator states that the people of each region worshipped the presiding deity, concerning their region. I may be true, But, it was also possible for the people of one region to worship gods presiding over the other tracts. For even in those days. Tirumal was housed in the hilly Venkatam and Alagarmalai, the littoral Puhar and the farm tract Madurai and Srirangam. Similarly the hill god Murugan had a temple at the littoral Alaivay (Tirchchendur) too.

494 Maduraikkanchi 591; Mullaikkali 3:55; Narrinai 31:1; Paripadal 3:10

495 Ahananuru, 21:1 Perumbanarruppadai 5

496 Tol. Porul Purat. Sutram 60. The dark mountain is likened to Mayon (Nattrinai, 31:1)

497 Paripadal, 3:41

498 Nanmanikkadigai Invocation 1; Neydarkali 29:64; Tinaimalai (150) 58;1.

Kannan (Krishna) also.[499] Mai means both 'black' and 'great'.[500] So, it is a natural name for Vishnu.[501] Tirumal is the sacred and black or great god. He is dark and His name represents both stature and intoxication.[502] He is the same as Mayon and is identified with Vishnu, especially Krishna. "Perhaps the Mullai being pastoral land and Krishna being a cowherd were the starting point of the identification."[503] Tirumal is praised in the Paripadal[504] and in the Aichchiyar Kuravai.[505] His stature is exemplified by the term Nedumal.[506] He is also Deiva Mal (divine Mal).[507] Further, Tirumal is spoken of when the black bull (kari) is mentioned.[508] The black bull with a white patch on its face is likened to Tirumal blowing the white conch.[509] Tirumal's black complexion is explicit in the name Kariyavan (the dusky).[510] The name Anchana Vannan (Krishna)[511] confirms this. Tirumal is Maya Vannan,[512] meaning 'he of the dark complexion'.[513]

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499 Silappadikaram XVII: Pattu: 1, 4 and 7 Eduttukkattu 11, 15 and 19; Padarkkaipparaval:6; Onranpagudi:5; Adunarppugaldal:1; and Karuppam. Durgha was Mayaval (Silappadikaram VI:59) Mayol is she of the dark complexion (Porunararruppadai 14). But Mayol would mean she of the fair complexion' if derived from Mamai, the colour of the tender mango leaf (Mullaippattu 21).

500 Perumbanarruppadai, 487.

501 Ahananuru, 59:6; Kurinjikkali 17:15; Mullaippattu 3; Naladiyar, 373:2; Palamoli, 48:1; 152:1; Paripadal 1:28; 3 35 and 60; 13:6; 19:57. Aniruddha has been called Mal (Paripadal 3:82) Murugan is Mal's nephew (Paripadal 19:57) Aiyai is Mal's younger sister (Silappadikaram XII: 68-69) Mal is a prefix for mountain indicating its greatness (Pattinappalai 138; Sirupanarruppadai 21, 99 and 330; Tirumurugarruppadai 12 and 256) and for sea denoting its black colour (Perumbanarruppadai, 487).

502 Subrahmanian N., Pre-Pallavan Tamil Index, p. 434.

503 Ibid.

504 Paripadal songs 1, 2, 3, 4, 13, 15 and Paripadal Tirattu song 1.

505 Canto XVII in Silappadikaram.

506 Silappadikaram, XVII : 4

507 Mullaikkali 7:33 Durgha is mentioned as the younger sister of Tirumal (Silappadikaram XII : 87; XII; Uraippattumadai : 3)

508 Mullaikkali, 4:9-10; 5:9-10; Vasudeva is also Kari (Paripadal 3:81)

509 Mullaikkali, 5:9-10.

510 Silappadikaram XVII : Padarkkaipparaval : 2

511 Silappadikaram VI: 47. Anchanam is a cosmetic applieod to blacken and thereby beautify the eye-lashes.

512 Padirruppattu VII Ten, Padigam : 8.

513 Subramanian N., Pre-Pallavan Tamil Index , p. 672.

Nediyon[514] (Tirumal) means the tall God. Nediyon is of blue complexion.[515] Parasurama, who destroyed the royal families, is also Nediyon.[516] He wields the Malu (axe).[517] Kaman is the son of Nediyon (Tirumal).[518] The expression Nilam Taru Tiruvil Nediyon means Tirumal, who embodies all the worlds in Himself.[519] Nedumudi Annal[520] and Neduvel[521] refer to him. Uyarndon[522] (Nediyon) is Tirumal at the Alagarmalai. Tirumal's complexion is blue too.[523] So, He is Nlnira Vannan[524] He appears like the blue gem.[525] Hence His name Manivannan[526] His complexion resembles the colour of the peacock's nape.[527] He is Kadal Vanan,[528] Kadal Vannan[529] and Munnir Vannan[530] because His colour is that of the sea. In the Ahananuru, the complexion of Tirumal is

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514 Manimekalai, XVII: 9; XIX: 51; Neydarkali 23:8 Padirruppattu, 15: 39; Palamoli 345:3; Purananuru, 56:13; Silappadikaram V : 172; VIII; 1; XI : 51; XII : 60; XXV : 21.

515 Perumbanattruppadai, 402; Silappadikaram V : 172

516 Ahananuru, 220: 5.

517 Ahananuru, 220:5, Bharatam Inra :3; Manimekalai, XXII : 25. Siva is also Malu Val Nediyon (Maduraikkanchi 455). K.A. Nilakanta Sastri thinks that "the crucial expression Malu Val Nediyon though generally interpreted as meaning Siva, may well apply to Vishnu also; and at least in later parlance Nediyon (the tall one) was exclusively applied to Vhisnu" (Development of Religion in South India, p.55). Murugan is also Nediyon (Ahananuru, 149: 16). While the Venktam hill of Tirumal is Nediyon Kunram (Silappadikaram VII :1), Tirupparinkunram of Murugan is also of that name (Ahanaunur 149:16). Murugan is Nediyan too (Tirumurugarruppadai 211).

518 Neyadarkali, 23:8

519 Maduraikkanchi 736. However that expression is applied to the Tamil monarchs like Illam Cheral Irumporai (Padirruppattu 82:16), Talaiyalanganattu Nedunjeliyan (Maduraikkanchi 763; Silappdikaram XXVII :3) and Makirtti (Tol. Sirappu 9). Vadimbalamba Ninra Pandiyan (Makirtti) is called Nediyon who were golden garlands and added lands to his realm (Maduraikkanchi 60-61). Ilam Set Senni, the Chola King, is another Nediyon who possessed Neydalankanal i.e., the coastal area (Purananuru 10:12).

520 Silappadikaram XI : 148.

521 Paripadal 3:37, Neduvel is used for Kaman (Silappdikaram XIV : 111) as well as Murugan (Ahananuru 22:6).

522 Silappadikaram, XI : 148

523 Perumbanarruppadai 402 ; Silappadikaram V : 172.

524 Manimekalai, V : 38.

525 Paripadal, 3 : 3; Purananur 56:5.

526 Silappadikaram, X : 10.

527 Mullaikkalai, 8 : 38.

528 Manimekalai, XXVII : 98.

529 Silappadikaram : XXVII : Munnilaipparaval : 1; Onranpagudi : 1.

530 Perumbannarruppadai, 30. "The Cholas were called the descendants of Munnir Kannan because Tirumal's son was brahma whose son kasyapa begot surya who was supposed to be the first progenitor of the Cholas" (N. Subrahmanian, pre-Pallavan Tamil Index, p.693).

distinguished from that of Siva, the former's like the sea and the latter's like the ruddy sky.[531] The Puvai (Kaya), a blue flower, is an object of common comparison with Tirumal's complexion.[532] In the Puram situation known as Vetchittinai, the practice of equaling the protecting king with the tutelary god, Tirumal of the Puvai complexion is called Puvai Nilai.[533] Kannan (Krishna), the son of Asodai (Yasoda), is denoted Puvai Vannan,[534] since His complexion is like the Puvai flower.

The Tamil word Ai (father, chief or leader) refers to Tirumal.[535] The Tolkappiyam mentions Kadavul,[536] denoting god who transcends thought, word and deed. Tirumal is mentioned as Kadavul.[537] He is Arari Kadavul.[538] That is He is known by the six Vedas. But the Vedas are just four and not six. Perhaps what is meant is the six Vedangas. Tirumal is Deivam (God).[539] He is also Deiva Mal[540] and Devan.[541] He is Ari (Hari).[542] Vindu means mountain.[543] In view of the stature also Tirumal may be called Vindu. Apart from this, Vindu refers to Tirumal.[544] N. Subrahmanian regards that Vindu is a corruption of Vishnu.[545] The association of the Tamil Vindu with Vishnu is noticed

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531 Ahananuru 360: 6-8

532 Ibid; 133:4; Nanmanikkadigai Invocation: 4; Paripadal, 1:6;3:73: 4:29; 13:42; Tirikadugam Invocation: 4: Silappadikaram, XVI: 47: XVII:47; XVII: Kolu: 14; Tol. Porul. 60:10.

533 Purananuru stanzas 8,9,10,56,59 and 374; Tol, Porul. 60:10

534 Silappadikaram, XVI : 47

535 Paripadal, 15: 26.

536 Tol. Porul. 88.

537 Paripadal, 3 : 43; Perumabanarruppadai 391; Silappadikaram XVII; A dunarppugal dal : 6

538 Paripadal, 3

539 Silappadikarm, XI : 160

540 Mullaikkali, 8 : 32

541 A Charakkovai 43:2. The two Devas, Siva and Tirumal, are represented respectively by their asterisms A dirai and Onam.

542 Silappadikaram XII : 106

543 Ahananuru, 235 : 5; Palamoli, 251 : 3.

544 Purananuru, 391 : 2 (See U.V. Saminatha Aiyar edition, Foot Note under St. 391).

545 N. Subrahmanian, Sangam Polity, p. 370

earlier.[546] Naranam[547] and Narayanan[548] are given as Tirumal's names. He is Mudalvan (the chief),[549] Amarar Mudalvan (the chief of gods),[550] Veda Mudalvan (the fountain of the Vedas)[551] and Mudumoli Mudalvan (the fountain of the Vedas).[552] Another appellation is Arumaraipporul (the content of the Vedas).[553] He is indicated as Aru Porul Ivan (the finality of all import).[554] He has other names like Periyavan (the great),[555] Pulavan (literally the poet or scholar, but here omniscient),[556] Munivan (the sage),[557] and Selvan (the wealthy).[558] He is both Alan (the ruler)[559] and Perajan (the emperor).[560] At the same time He is Sevagan (the servant; perhaps also the guardian).[561] Kovalar are the cowherds. It is natural that Krishna (Kannan) the cowherd, is mentioned as Kovalan.[562] Perhaps the word Kovalan is derived from Gopalan. Tirumal is also a Kovalan.[563] Kovalan in the Silappadikaram is described as Gnana Virutta Gopalan (Kovalan, the mature in wisdom).[564] Tirumal at the Alagarmalai is Irum Kunrattan (the

546 See the References 7, 8 and 9

547 Manimekali, XXVII : 99.

548 Silappadikaram, XVII : Padarkkaipparaval : 15.

549 Manimekalai, XXVII : 99.

550 Silappadikaram, XVII : Padarkkaipparaval : 15.

551 Manimekalai, XIII : 58; Neyadarkali 8:1

552 Paripadal, 3:53

553 Ibid; 1:13.

554 Silappadikaram, XVII: Munnilaipparaval : 2.

555 Ibid; XVII; Padarkkaipparaval : 6.

556 Paripadal, 3:86.

557 Ibid.

558 Ahananuru, 175:15; Mullaikkali 9;55; Padirruppattu, 3:19.

559 Paripadal, 3:38

560 Ibid; 3:39

561 Silappadikaram, XVII : Padarkkaipparaval : 1

562 Paripadal, 3;83.

563 Palamoli, 152:2.

564 Silappadikaram, XV : 94.

Lord of the great hill).[565] He is accosted 'Kudavala' since He performed the Kudam (pot, of either clay or metal) dance.[566] He is hailed, the Father of the Two (Brahma and Kaman).[567]

Tamaraikannan[568] denotes Tirumal. In the Paripadal, His hands are enumerated from one to the countless number.[569] For instance, He is called Narkai Annal (the great four-armed god) [570] and Ainkai Maindan (the mighty five-armed god).[571] So, Annal[572] and Maindan[573] are also His names. He is Kadal Kadaindan (the churner of the Milk Ocean).[574] He is also Malaimisai Ninran (God standing on the mountain top),[575] for He resides at the Alagarmalai. The act of measuring the world added more names to Him. Ninilam Kadanda Nedumudi Annal,[576] Adi Alandan,[577] Ulagam Tavina Annal,[578] Nil Nilam Alandon,[579] and Vaiyam Alandan[580] are some such. Madavali,[581] Arral[582] and Veyyon[583] indicate the mighty and valiant Tirumal. He resides in the Al (the banyan tree).[584] So, He

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565 Paripadal, 15:53

566 Ibid; 3:38

567 Ibid; 1:30

568 Tirukkural, 1103

569 Paripadal, 3; 34-45

570 Ibid; 3:38

571 Ibid; 3:39

572 Ibid; 3:38

573 Ibid; 3:39

574 Silappadikaram, XVII : Ulvari Valttu : 3

575 Ibid; XI : 133

576 Ibid; XI : 148.

577 Tirukkural, 610.

578 Palamoli, 67 : 3

579 Manimekalai, III : 24

580 Silappadikaram, XVII : Eduttukkattu : 21

581 Paripadal, 3 : 40

582 Ibid; 3 : 40

583 Purananuru, 56 : 6

584 Paripadal, 4 : 67

is Al Amar Kadavul.[585] But, it may very well signify Siva too. For, in the Silappadikaram, Al Amar Selvan[586] refers to Dakshinamurti (Siva). Tirumal is Tiruvin Kanavan (Husband of Tiru).[587] Tiru [Lakshmi] resides in His chest and so He is Tiru Amar Marban.[588] It is said He has the sacred Maru [Kaustubham] in His chest. Hence His name Tiru Maru Marban.[589] He is Tulayan[590] and Tulai Malaiyan[591] for He wears the garland of Tulasi [the holy basil; Ocymum sanctum]. Since He wields the disc [wheel] weapon He is known as Chakkarattan,[592] Tigiriyan,[593] Tigiriyon,[594] Tigirippadaiyan,[595] Tigirichchelvan,[596] Nemiyan[597] and Aliyan.[598] He served as an arrow to Siva and so He got the name Kanai.[599] The plough Weapon of Balarama secured Him the rams Nanjilon.[600] He mounts the bird (Garuda). So, He is Pullur Kadavul.[601] He has Garuda emblem on His flag. This led to His being called Pulmisaikkodiyon,[602] Sevalon[603] and Uvanachcheval Uyartton.[604] He reclines on the snake bed (Adisesha) and bears the name Aravanaikkidandon.[605]

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585 Purananuru, 198 : 9. The commentator calls Tirumal (Krishna) lying on the banyan leaf thus. But he also admits that this could mean Siva too. Expression like this have elsewheres

586 Silappadikaram, XXIII : 91-95

587 Paripadal, 3:90.

588 Silappadikaram, XI : 40.

589 Mullaikkali, 4 : 10; Perumbanarruppadai 31.

590 Paripadal, 15 : 15.

591 Silappadikaram, XVII : Munnilaipparaval : 2.

592 Inna, (40) 1 : 3

593 Mullaikkali, 4 : 78.

594 Narrinai Invocation : 7

595 Silappadikaram XVII : Ulvari Valttu : 2

596 Paripadal, 13 : 58

597 Mullaikkali, 5 : 9 and 72; Neydarkali 2:3; 10:4.

598 Palamoli, 248 : 1; Paripadal Tirattu 1 : 69; Tinaimalai (150) 96 : 1

599 Puranaru, 55 : 2.

600 Paripadal, 13 : 33

601 Silappadikaram, XVII : Adunarppugaldal : 6

602 Paripadal, 8 : 2

Tirumal's Features

Tirumal's mind is spoken of as broad.[606] He embodies everything that has come into being.[607] His stature and complexion have been noticed already. Narrinai regards the sky as His physique and the sea as His dress.[608] But the Paripadal informs that His dress is in direct contrast to His bodily complexion.[609] Tirumal's dress is golden.[610] His mouth is red[611] and eyes are also red.[612] The reddish eyes are natural to Him and are so even when not angry.[613] His eyes are blemishless.[614] He is Tamaraikannan (the lotus-eyed).[615] His eyes are comparable to the very lotus that blossomed out of His navel.[616] The Sun and the Moon are also regarded as His eyes.[617] He has a broad chest,[618] resembling the mountain.[619] The Sangam literature does not speak of any sacred thread or, His chest.[620] The pungent and strong smelling Tulasi is specially sacred to Him. Tulasi

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603 Ibid; 3: 18.

604 Silappadikaram, XVII : Adunarppugaldal : 6

605 Ibid; XXX : 51

606 Paripadal, 13 : 54

607 Narrinai Invocation : 5

608 Ibid; 2-3

609 Paripadal, 4 : 8

610 Ibid; 1 : 9-10 and 58; 3 : 88; 13 : 1-2; 15 : 27-28; Silappadikaram XI : 50

611 Paripadal, 13 : 50-51; Silappadikaram XVII : Padarkkaipparaval : 2

612 Silappadikaram, XI : 51

613 Paripadal, 13 : 57

614 Ibid; 4 : 10

615 Tirukkural, 1103.

616 Paripadal, 4 : 61; 15 : 49.

617 Naririnai Invocation : 4

618 Paripadal, 13:12 and 54.

619 Mullaikkali, 8 : 55

620 However, the Nalayira Divya Prabandham (St.3309) mentions His sacred thread.

is Tulai[621] and Tulavam (Tulavam).[622] His chest is adorned with the Tulasi garlands.[623] Krishna also wears the Tulasi garlands.[624] "Nachchinarkkiniyar speaks of Tiruttul.aippu (the sacred Tulasi flower). It is not known if he refers to the Tu]asi leaves by that".[625] There is a difference of opinion as to the pleasantness of its odour. In the Padirruppattu[626] and in the Paripadal,[627] Tulasi is mentioned as fragrant smelling. But the old commentary on the Padiruppattu considers it odourless.[628] Tirumal wears a garland of flame-like Vetchi flowers (Ixora coccinea) interspersed with the sweet smelling Tulasi.[629] The Vetchi flower is Eri Nagai.[630] Tirumal's adorns the Aram (chain) on His Chest.[631] That has the rainbow colours.[632] His pearl chain, with the pendant (Madani) attached, is a contrast to His complexion.[633] The pearl chain on His chest resembles the descent of the water-falls from the mountain and shines like lightning.[634] The Maru

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621 Kurinjippattu, 90

622 Paripadal, 13:29; Silappadikaram XII:113

623 Iniyavai (40). 1:2; Kurinjippattu 90; Padirruppattu 31:7-8; Paripadal 13:29; Silappadikaram XII: 10 and 113; XVII: Munnilaipparaval:2

624 Silappadikaram XVII Eduttukkattu:19

625 Subrahmanian N., Pre-Pallavan Tamil Index , p. 445

626 Padirruppattu, 31:7-9

627 Paripadal, 4:58; 15:15

628 Old commentary on the Padirruppattu 31:8 and contra Paripadal 4:58.

629 Paripadal 13:59.

630 Ibid; 13:59-60. But the lotus is Eri Malar (Paripadal 1:6; 9;4)

631 Silappadikaram XI:49.

632 Ahananuru 175:14-16; Paripadal 2:28-29;

633 Paripadal; 13: 3-4.

634 Ibid; 13:10-11.

(Kaustubham) in His chest is equated to Tirumagal and discussed in the section under Tirumal's consorts.

Tirumal's shoulders are great.[635] He wears the Tulasi garlands around His shoulders.[636] He wears the armlet.[637] His neck is great.[638] His navel is lotus-like[639] and is denoted Kamalam.[640] All the worlds and everything in them arose from His navel.[641] His hip is broad.[642] His hands are red[643] and lotus-like.[644] All the directions are his hands.[645] Like His immeasurable fame, His hands are innumerable.[646] “The hand is conceived of as essential to do an act. To do more acts, many hands are required".[647] Therefore His hands are enumerated from one onwards upto infinity in the Paripadal.[648] Therein occurs the names Ainkai Maindan and Arukai Neduvel referring to Tirumal. Whether these two names are references to Ganesa and Murugan respectively is a question. Basically the purpose of enumeration of Tirumal's hands in this context is clearly not to identify other gods with him. Otherwise one may be required to go in search of gods for equating with each number of hands ascribed to Tirumal and It is a task well nigh impossible. Ainkai Maindan means the

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635 Ibid; 13 : 53.

636 Ibid; 4:58; 8 : 1; 13:60; 15:15.

637 Ibid; 13:52.

638 Ibid; 13:53.

639 Ibid; 3:12-14 and 93-94; 15:49 Silappadikaram XVII; Munnilaipparaval:1; padarkkaipparaval:2.

640 Silappadikaram, XVII; Munnilaipparaval :4 and 9 Padarkkaipparaval :2.

641 Silappadikaram, XVII:Padarkkaipparaval :2.

642 Paripadal, 13:54.

643 Silappadikaram XVII: Padarkkaipparaval :2

644 Paripadal, 13:50-51; Silappadikaram XI : 48.

645 Narrinai Invocation :3.

646 Paripdal, 3:32.

647 Varadachari V. Note on the Religious and Philosophical content of the Paripadal in Ayvokkovai, Annamalainagar, 1971, p.403.

648 Paripadal, 3:34-45

mighty god with five hands. It refers to Tirumal in this context and not Ganesa. N. Subrahmanian observes, It is true that Ganesa is not particularly mentioned either by that name or any of its modern equivalents in the Sangam literature.[649] Arukai Neduvel, according to V.Varadachari, means either Murugan Himself with six hands or the great lord controlling the six senses with hands.[650] It reeds no mention that Murugan has twelve hands and that the senses are five. Arukai Neduvel in this context means only the beloved and tali Tirumal endowed with six hands. Further, Tirumal's hand is described sarcastically in the Paripadal as the one benefit of beneficence and impartiality.[651] The reference obviously is to His distribution of nectar only to the gods while leaving out the asuras entirely. Tirumal wears the Todi (bangles) in His hands.[652] The feet of Tirumal are great.[653] This big world forms his feet.[654] They are red and so spoken of as Sevadi.[655]

They are lotus-like.[656] They resemble the golden lotus.[657] His feet are blemishless.[658] His two feet are the Talinai.[659] The mere thought of them would provide protection and dispel sufferings.[660] Measuring the world, felling the Kurundam (a tree with fragrant foliage) and kicking the Maya Saradam (an asura in the garb of a cart and

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649 Subramanian N. Sangam Polity, op.cit., p.375.

650 Varadachari V. Op.cit., p.403.

651 Paripadal. 3:34

652 Ibid; 13:52.

653 Ibid; 13:54.

654 Narrinai Invocation 1.

655 Narrinai Inovation 1; Padirruppattu 31:9 Silappadikaram XI:104; XVII; Padarkkaipparaval:1 and 2

656 Silappadikaram XVII; Munnilaipparaval :3

657 Ibid; XI:134.

658 Paripadal, 3:2.

659 Silapadikaram, XI:137 and 149.

660 Ibid; XI : 137.

sent by Kamsan) were the three feats of Tirumal's feet.[661] The two feel of Tirumal are superior even to Tirumal Himself.[662]

TIRUMAL'S FLAG AND MOUNT

Garuda (the Brahmany kite) is the emblem on the flag of Tirumal.[663] Although the word Garuda has no mention in the Sangam literature, Pul (bird),[664] Seval (male fowl)[665] Uvanam (the Brahmany kite)[666] and Pappuppagai (enemy of the snakes)[667] refer to Garuda. Tirumal's Garuda flag is golden[668] and is long.[669] It flutters high in the sky.[670] The flat; at the Alagarmalai temple is said to be visible ever from a distance.[671] The palmyra[672] and the elephant[673] also figure as signs marked on Tirumal's flag. Garuda is Tirumal's mount too.[674] So, Sevalurdi (the Garuda vehicle)[675] is a

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661 Tirikadugam Invocation 1-4.

662 Paripadal, 4:62

663 Ibid; 1:57; 2:60;3:18; 4:36; 8:2;13:4 and 38; 15:56; Purananuru 17:487; 56:6; Silappdikaram XI:136; XIV:8;Tirumurugarruppadai, 151.

664 Palamoli, 67:2; Paripadal 1:57; 3:16-17; 8;2;15:56; Purananurua 17:48; 56:6; Silappdikarma XI:136; Tirumurugarruppadai 151

665 Paripadal, 1:11; 3:18. It is well knwon that Seval (cock) is the emblem on Murugan's flag.

666 Kalavali (40) 26:4; Paripadal 2:60; Silappadikaram XIV; 8.

667 Paripdal, 13:38.

668 Ibid; 15:56.

669 Ibid; 2:60; 3:18; Silappadikaram XI:136;

670 Purananuru, 56:6

671 Silappadikaram XI:136.

672 Inna (40). 1:2; Paripadal 4:38; Purananuru 56:4.

673 Paripadal, 4:40.

674 Silapadikaram, XVII : A dunarppugal Idal : 6.

675 Paripadal, 3 : 60.

name for Garuda. He has a red mouth[676] and curved feathers containing many stripes.[677] His enmity towards the snakes is proverbial.[678] Yet, he has snakes all over his body resembling the various ornaments worn on the head and feathers aid around the neck as well as the ones appearing like the waist-band, bangles and garlands.[679] Such a graphic picture is conspicuous by its absence in the Sanskrit words of early times.[680] The Paripadal relates two legends associated with Garuda. One is about his fetching nectar from Indra's abode to secure the release of his mother (Viratai) from bondage.[681] The second deals with the reduction of his conceit. Once he claimed the victory of Vishnu (Upendra, the younger brother of Indra) over the asuras as his own since he carried Him. Thereupon, Vishnu placed His small finger on Garuda who instantly descended to the nether world unable to bear the weight. Thus ended Garuda's conceit.[682]

Tirumal's Couch

The name Adisesha does not occur in the Sangam works. But Aravu (serpent)[683] and Pambu (snake)[684] refer to him. His fierce hoods numbering a thousand are lifted up as an umbrella to provide shade over Tirumal's head.[685] He serves as a couch (bed) for Tirumal to recline upon.[686] The Aravanai (the serpent couch)[687] and Pambanai (the snake

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676 Ibid; 2 : 60.

677 Tirumurugarruppadai, 150.

678 Paripadal, 3:38; Tirumurugarruppadai 149 – 150.

679 Paripadal, 4: 42-48.

680 Varadachari V., Op.cit., p.404.

681 Paripadal, 3: 15-16.

682 Ibid; 3 : 59-62.

683 Mullaikkali, 5: 71 – 72; Silappadikaram X : 9 – 10.

684 Perumbanarruppadai, 373.

685 Paripadal, 1 : 1-4.

686 Ibid; 3 : 59 – 62.

687 Mullaikkali, 5: 71 – 72; Silappadikaram X : 9 – 10.

bed)[688] indicate Vishnu's Seshasayanam. Adisesha's services to Tirumal as an umbrella and a bed are recognised by the post-Sangam period too.[689] The sight of Tirumal's reclined posture on the serpent couch presents the picture of an elephant that lay on a mountain full of Kandal flowers (Gloriosa superba).[690] Adisesha has several exploits to his credit. In the Paripadal Tirattu he is said to have served as the rope for churning the Milk Ocean.[691] Evidently Adisesha is substituted here for Vasuki. The exact reason for this proxy is not explicit. It may be an attempt to draw Vasuki's repute to the name of Adisesha. Next, he was the saviour of the Meru mountain from the gushing wind.[692] Then he wore the earth as a jewel on the head.[693] Moreover, he functioned as the string in the Meru bow during the destruction of the Tripuras by Siva.[694] Indeed Adisesha is adroit in serving the Two.

Tirumal's Weapons

Sudarsanam (disc), Panchajanyam (conch), Sarngam (bow), Nandagam (sword) and Gaumedagam (mace) are the highly famed five weapons of Vishnu.[695] None of these Sanskrit names is found in the Sangam works. But Tirumal's five weapons were collectively known as the Aimpadai and were individually referred to. The Aimpadaittali, a necklace containing the miniature figures of Tirumal's five weapons, was meant for

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688 Perumbanarruppadai, 373: Silappadikaram XI: 37-38.

689 Infact Poigai Alvar includes these two services among the several duties rendered by Adishsha to Tirumal (Nalayira Divya Prbandham, St. 2134)

690 Perumbanarruppadai, 371-373.

691 Paripadal. Tirattu. 1:65-71.

692 Ibid; 1:74.

693 Ibid; 1:75.

694 Ibid; 1:76-78.

695 A hymn by Pey Alvar informes that Tirumal has eight weapons in His eight hands (Nalayira Divya Prabandham, St. 2380)

children to ward off evil and provide safety.[696] In this connection, K.A.Nilakanta Sastri remarks that the Aimpadaittali was an armlet.[697] S. Vaithilingam regards it a neck-ornament.[698] U.V. Saminatha Aiyar calls it merely an ornament made into the shape of the five weapons of the protecting deity Tirumal.[699] Since mentioned as a Tali it was perhaps tied around the neck. The Pandya Talai-yalanganattu Nedunjeliyan is mentioned as so young that the Tali Was not yet removed by then[700] is mentioned as wearing a golden Tali.[701] Yet another charm for the children of those days was the Pulippal Tali (a necklace with a pendant of tiger's teeth).[702] This was also supposed to protect the children from the evil forces.[703] The disc and the conch were the prominent among the weapons of Vishnu. The disc is called Nemi,[704] Ali,[705] Parudi,[706] Tigiri,[707] Chakkaram[708] and Vattam.[709] The disc is bright,[710] golden[711] and flame-like.[712] Tirumal

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696 Ahananuru 54:18; Manimekalai III: 138, VI : 56; Purananuru 77:7; Tinaimalai (150). 66:3. In medieval times, Jayankondar's Kalingattupparani (240) mentions Aimpadai as those of Tirumal whereas Paranjoti's Tiruvilaiyadal Puranam 939:25) speaks merely of Aimpadai.

697 Nilakanta Sastri K.A., Development of Religion in South India, op.cit., p.33.

698 Vaithilingam S., Fine Arts and Crafts in Pattuppatti Ettutogai, p. 313.

699 Purananuru, St. 77 Commentary (See U.V. Saminatha Aiyar edition, 1956).

700 Ibid; 77:7-8.

701 Ahananru, 54:18.

702 Purananuru, 374:9.

703 Kuruntogai, 161:3.

704 Mullaikkali, 4:9; 5:72; Mullaipattu 1: Neydarkali 10:4; Paripadal 1:54; 15:60; Purananuru 58:15.

705 Palamoli, 248:1; Paripadal Tirattu 1:69; Silappadikaram XI. 47.

706 Paripadal Tirattu. 3:89.

707 Mullaikkali 4:78; Narrinai Invocation :7; Padirruppattu 31:8; Paripadal 13:58.

708 Inna (40), 1:3; Silappadikaram XIII:57.

709 Paripadal, 15:62.

710 Padirruppattu, 31:8.

711 Silappadikaram, XVII: Ulvari Valttu :2.

712 Paripadal, 2:51.

wielded it in His right hand.[713] Usually Tirumal's disc and conch are spoken together. There is a view that Tirumal's palms contain the chakra and sankha rekhas,[714] the possession of which is deemed a superb characteristic. Tirumal's conch is Valai,[715] Valampuri (conch with spirals turned to the right)[716] and Sankham.[717] It is White.[718] Tirumal-blew it loudly and its sound was thunder-like.[719] The bow held by Tirumal is Silai.[720] His arrow is Ambu,[721] also known as Narayam,[722] His mace is Dandu.[723] Nanjil, the plough weapon ascribed to Balarama, is Tirumal's also.[724]

Tirumal's Consorts

Tirumagal[725] is Lakshmi and consort of Tirumal (Vishnu). She is goddess of wealth and prosperity. Ilakkumi is a Tamil variant of Lakshmi.[726] She is known as Tiru (Sri or Auspicious).[727] Tirumadandai (Auspicious Dame),[728] Tiruvin Seyyol (the red goddess of

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713 Ibid; 1:54; 3:89. Durgha wielded the disc (Silappadikaram XII: 108). Aiyai too had it (Silappadikaram Uraippattumadai:9)

714 Commentary onthe Mullaippatu 1-2. Corroboration for this is noticable in the Sivaka Chintamani (St.204), Sulamani (Kumara:45) and Kamba Ramayanam (Krishkinds Kandam Maramarappadalam, 117)

715 Mullaikkali, 9:10.

716 Mullaippattu, 2.

717 Silppadikaram, XI:47.

718 Ibid; XI:47.

719 Paripadal, 2:37-40.

720 Ibid; 15:60.

721 Ibid; 15:60.

722 Palomoli, 80:4.

723 Paripadal, 15:59.

724 Ibid;13:33.

725 Manimekalai, XIX:54; Silappadikaram, V:213; VI: 127, Since Tirumagal is the goddess of wealth and prosperity the rich Pattinappakkam in Puhar was called Tirumagal Iruppu (residence of Lakshmi)

726 The Manimekala deity adressed Manimekalai the heroine of the Tamil epic Manimekalai as Illukkumi (Manimekalai X:20) for the bore the name Illukkumi in her previous birth (Manimekalai VII:108)

727 Neydarkali 27:64; Padirrppattu 31:7; Pattinappalai 291; Silappadikaram XI:40; XVII; Eduttukkattu :21

728 Bharatam, ‘Teron’ :2.

wealth),[729] Seyyol,[730] Seyyaval,[731] Seyyal,[732] Nallal (the good goddess)[733] Pon (the golden goddess),[734] Pori (Lakshmi),[735] Tamaraiyinal (She of the lotus),[736] Puvin Kilatti (Lady of the lotus)[737] and Ma (the great goddess).[738] Tip lotus which is divine,[739] due perhaps to its association with Tiru, is fit for adorning all deities[740] Tirumal's chest is Tiru-magal's seat[741] Even before he wedded Bhudevi (the goddess Earth), whom He saved from the deluge, Tiru was seated m His chest.[742] The pearl pendant in His chest appears like the Moon, but it is curious to know that Tirumagal seated there resembles the spot on the Moon[743] The real spot, according to the Vaishnava tradition, is the Maru (mark or spot) said to be in the chest of Tirumal. It is generally denoted Tiru Maru, the prefix indicating its holiness. Placement of Tiru Maru in Tirumal's chest led to His being called Tiru Maru Marban.[744] The Mara beautifies His chest.[745] Kaduvan Ilaveyi-nanar

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729 Silappadikaram, VI:61.

730 Ahananuru, 316:13; Manimekalai V:4; XVI;34; Paripadal 2:31.

731 Tirukkural, 167.

732 Namanikadigai, 67:3; Paripadal Tirattu 1:1; Tirukkural 84.

733 Nanmanikadigai, 43:2.

734 Perumbanarruppadai, 424.

735 Tirikadugam, 15:1.

736 Tirukkural, 617.

737 Naladiyar, 252;4.

738 Mullaippattu, 2; Paripadal 1:3.

739 Sirupanarruppadai, 73.

740 Ibid; 289-290.

741 Mullaikkali 4:10; Mullaippattu 2; Neydarkali 27:64; Padirruppattu 31:7; paripdal 1:3; Silappadikaram XI:40; VII: Eduttukattu:21. Thiru is spoken of as seated in the chest of the king stoo (Ahananuru 13:6; Malaipadukadam 356). The Nalayir Divya Prabandham provides an interesting piece of information (St. 3650) that Tirumal's chest houses Siva and Brahma too. Tirumagal was a guardian deity of the fortress (Pattinappalai 291)

742 Paripadal, 2:31-36.

743 Ibid; 2:28-31.

744 Mullaikkali, 4:10; Paripadal 1:39; 4:59; Perumbanarruppadai, 29. Aruhan has 1008 Marus (Sivaka Chintamani; Invocation 2:2)

describes the Maru as golden coloured in the Paripadal.[746] This draws the attention of R. Sarangapani to state that all the poets other than him have indicated its colour as black.[747] But Tiruttakka Tevar in his Sivaka Chintamani clearly states that its colour is golden.[748] Pillai Perumal Aiyangar in his Tiruvaranga Kalambagam calls it a gem shining like me Sun.[749] In the Sanskrit-English, Dictionary of M. Monier-Williams, it is given that the Kaustubham is the name of a celebrated jewel obtained along with thirteen other precious things during the churning of the Milk Ocean and that it is suspended on Vishnu's chest. But, Sangam works do not reveal clearly the conception of the Maru being a jewel (gem). It is neither equated with the Kaustubham nor mentioned as being suspended on Vishnu's chest. But, the Maru is closely associated with His chest. Therefore, the Maru during the Sangam Age perhaps was regarded as none but Lakshmi who is a permanent feature or mark in Vishnu's chest.

Nappinnai is the Aymagal par excellence.[750] She is 'Krishna's favourite cowherdess corresponding to Radha of Sanskrit mythology".[751] She is denoted Pinnai[752] or Pinnai.[753] Pinnai is none but Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu. For Pinnai means the latter-born'. In other words, She is younger to Jyeshta (Mudevi). It is said that while churning the Milk Ocean Jyeshta appeared first and thereafter Lakshmi. In the Tamil tradition, Pinnai is the

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745 Paripadal 1:8-9.

746 Ibid; 4:59.

747 Sarangapani R., Paripadal, Tiran, p. 137.

748 Sivaka Chintamani, Invocation :2:2

749 Tiruvaranga Kalambagam, St. 1

750 Silappadikaram XVII: Eduttukkattu : 12-13.

751 Subrahmanian N., Pre-Pallavan Tamil Index, p. 570.

752 Silappadikaram XVII: Adunarppugaldal:1; Onranpagudi :2.

753 Manimekalai XIX. 65; Silappadikram XVII. Eduttukkattu:14 and 16; Onranpagudi. 1.

wife of Kannan (Tirumal).[754] She played the Kuravai dance with Him.[755] Hence, Tirumal's failure to glance at Lakshmi seated in His chest.[756] Pinnai wore bangles in the hands.[757]

Tirumal's Sons

Brahma is Padaittan (the Creator),[758] Padaitton (the Creator),[759] Mudiyavan (the Ancient),[760] Vaymoli Magan (son of the Vedas),[761] Uli Mudalvan (Chief of the aeons),[762] Adi Andanar (the primeval Brahmin),[763] Chatur Mugan (the four-faced god)[764] and Nanmugan (the four-faced god).[765] Tirumal is the progenitor of Brahma,[766] who appeared from the lotus-navel of Tirumal.[767] This is indicated by His name Puvinut Pirandon.[768] His other names like Puvan[769] and Tamarai lrai[770] mean that He is the Lord of the lotus. The lotus is Brahma' seat and so He is Pumelon[771] and Malarmisai Mudalvan.[772] The simultaneous emergence of the lotus and Brahma from Tirumal's

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754 Inna (40), 22:2; Silappadikaram XVII; Eduttukkattu: 13 and 22

755 Silappadikaram XVII; Eduttukkattu, 21-22; and Karuppam and Venba.

756 Ibid; XVII. Eduttukkattu :22.

757 Ibid; XVII: A dunarppugaldal :1; Eduttukkattu :22.

758 Neydarkali, 12:2.

759 Purananuru, 194:5.

760 Palaikkali, 2:1.

761 Paripadal, 3:93.

762 Manimekalai, VI:172.

763 Paripadal, 5:22.

764 Silappadikaram, X:186.

765 Perumbanarrupadai, 403; Tirumurugarruppadai 165.

766 Silappadikaram, XVI. 48.

767 Paripadal, 3:13-14.

768 Paripadal Tirattu, 1:7.

769 Paripadal, 1:46.

770 Ibid; 9:4.

771 Silappdikaram, XII:106.

772 Paripadal, 8:3.

navel is indicated in the Paripadal.[773] Brahma was Siva's Charioteer during the destruction of the Tripuras.[774] Kannan,[775] the Hindu Cupid, is known by several names such as Kamakadavul,[776] Kama Vel,[777] Nedu Vel,[778] Vel,[779] Maran,[780] Van Terppagan[781] and Maindan.[782] Being the son of Tirumal, He is Man Magan (Mal Magan)[783] and Nediyon Magan.[784] Kaman is formless, and so Uruvilalan[785] and Kalaiyilalan.[786] Kaman and His wife (Rati) are beautiful.[787] His brother is Saman.[788] Kaman has wealth and weapons.[789] Sugar-cane is His bow.[790] So, He is Karuppuvilli.[791] He uses the fragrant floral arrows.[792] So, He is Aruppukkanai Maindan[793] and Malar Ambinon.[794] His flag has the carp (fish) as emblem.[795] Hence His names Magarakkodiyon,[796] Min Kodiyon,[797]

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773 Ibid, 3:91-94.

774 Ibid; 5:22.

775 Ibid; 18:28.

776 Silappadikaram, VI: 2; XV: 102.

777 Paripadal, 18:28; Silappadikaram, IV:60

778 Silappadikaram, XIV:111.

779 Silappadikram, XXVIII:42. Vel denotes Murugan too (Paripadal 1:61)

780 Paripadal, 8:119; Silappadikram, VIII:6.

781 Manimekalai, XX :91.

782 Silappadikaram, IV:83.

783 Ibid; VII: 28:2.

784 Neydarkali, 28:8.

785 Manimekalai, V:6; Silappadikaram II: 44; V:224; VII: 2nd Venba 2: XIV:36; XXX;25.

786 Silappadikaram, X:28

787 Paripadal, 19:48

788 Marudakkali, 29:34

789 Paripadal, 11:123

790 Silappadikaram, IV: 82; XXVII : 233.

791 Manimegalai, XX: 92: XXV:90.

792 Manimegalai, XX. 92; XXV: 90; Silappadikaram II.26; IV: 82; VIII;62, XXVII:233; XXVIII:19.

793 Manimegalai, XX:92

794 Paripadal Tirattu, 2:26

795 Palaikkali, 26:3; Silappadikaram, IV:3; V:5 and 25; VII:10:2 and 13:1

Minerruk-kodiyon[798] and Surakkodiyon.[799] Kaman induces love instinct in womenfolk by shooting the floral arrows.[800] The lovers' play during the spring season in a garden, where the cuckoos, seated on flowery branches and calling their mates, is a feast to Kaman.[801]

Avataras and Legends

The stories connected with Vishnu's Avataras are found Sprinkled over in the Sangam literature. Vishnu's many descents were clearly discerned by the ancient Tamils. This is noticeable in His description as Ambai Yakkaiyan.[802] Maraimalai Adigal observes that the conception of incarnation is the creation of northern Aryans and they have really no connection with the Tamil Tirumal.[803] This is largely true. The extent of this northern influence over Tamil Vaishnavism may be gleaned from the fact that the Matsya and Kalki (the first and the last) incarnations alone are exempted from mention in the Sangam works. M. Raghava Aiyangar points out that certain episodes are germane to the Tamil tradition and mentions Nappinnai's marriage with Kannan, the bending of the Kurundam, the Release (Vidu) secured for Tadi Pandan and Taji, the beheading of Simaligan etc., as instances of pure Tamil mythology.[804] P.Arunachalam concurs by stating that such stories are absent in the Sanskrit epics and puranas.[805]

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796 Silappadikaram, XXVIII :19.

797 Manimekalai, XX:91.

798 Silappadikaram, V:210.

799 Neydarkali, 30:42.

800 Ibid; 22:20-23.

801 Marudakkali, 27:68-69.

802 Paripadal, 3:44-45.

803 Maraimalai Adigal **Manikkavachagar Varalarum Kalamum** Vol. II p. 447. Sircar D.C.Suggests the settlement of a section of the Vrishni people at Madurai and the Promotion of the bhakti and Krishna cult (Early History of Vaishnavism p.142, in The cultural Heritage of India, Vol. III)

804 Raghava Aiyangar M. Araichchi Toguid p. 43.

805 Arunachalam P., Bhakti Illakiyam, Madras, 1972, p. 43.

Alluding to the Kurmavatara story, the Paripadal informs that Tirumal lent His head to keep the churn (the Mandara Mountain) in its position during the churning of the Milk Ocean.[806] But here Adisesha is mentioned as the churning rope The traditional view that Vasuki served that purpose is found in the Silappadikaram.[807] Varaha is Kelal[808] and Kaliru.[809] The golden Kimburi (thimble) adorns Varaha's horn.[810] He lifted the earth from the deluge on His neck and positioned it in tact, a function usually ascribed to the Meru mountain.[811] Then He married Bhudevi (Goddess Earth), although Lakshmi was already present in His chest.[812] It is strange that R.Sarangapani regards that the Paripadal alone refers to the Narasimhavatara.[813] Apart from the Paripadal,[814] mention about Narasimha is seen in the Silappadikaram too.[815] Narasimha and Hiranya are referred to as Mudangal (lion) and Maru (enemy) in the Silap padikaram. The former is said to kill the latter. In the Pari padal, Prahlada is called Pirungalatan. As he showered praises on Tirumal, Hiranya became so furious that the sandal pasted on his body turned dry and peeled off. To ward off any trouble from the father to the son, Tirumal, appeared suddenly from the pillar, kicked Hiranya on the chest and tore him apart with the claws.[816] At the time of the Lord's appearance, Hiranya's drum beat automatically

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806 Paripadal, 1:65-66.

807 Silappdikaram, XVII:Pattu 2; Munnilaipparaval : 1

808 Paripadal, 3:24.

809 Ibid; 2:35.

810 Ibid; 13:35-36.

811 Ibid; 3:23-24; 4: 22-24.

812 Ibid; 2:31-35.

813 Sarangapani R., Paripadal Tiran p. 147

814 Paripadal, 4:10-21.

815 Silappadikaram, XVII: Munnilaipparaval : 3

816 Narasimha appeared during the evening twilight, dragged Hiranya by the hair, kept him on the lap and killed him by the claws (Nalayira Divya Prabandham, St. 1345 and 2674)

emanating the drumming noise,[817] apparently portending his death.[818] The Vamanavatara story was know to the ancient Tamils. Mavali (Mahabali) is mentioned.[819] As Mavali poured water, assuring the three feet of land,[820] Tirumal measured the worlds with His feet.[821] He passed, over the three worlds with His two feet.[822] Finding His might and greatness, the frightened asuras hid themselves inside the sea.[823] Parasurama is called Nediyon wielding the Maluval (axe).[824] He was sworn to destroy the Kshatriyas.[825] He rooted out the royal dynasties[826] and then performed a sacrifice at Sellur.[827] Kagandan offered to fight Parasurama but fled. At His behest Kagandan ruled from Kavirippum-pattinam.[828]

K.A. Nilakanta Sastri says, "The stories of the Ramayana and Mahabharata were well known to the early Tamil poets and they refer frequently to episodes from these epics".[829] But a careful glance through the Sangam literature might exhibit the absence of any reference of importance to Rama as a deity. The present day Hindus

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817 Paripadal, 4:19-21.J

818 For the omen of this type, see the Kamba Ramanayanm, Sundar Kandam, Katchippadalam, St. 42

819 Manimekalai XIX: 54 "Possibly there was a Mavali who founded a petty dynasty which later developed into Mavali Vanarayas. But the reference here is surely to the puranic "asura Mahabali" (N. Subrahmanian, Pre Pallavan Tamil Index p. 675)

820 Mullaippattu, 3.

821 Neydarkali, 7:1; Paripadal 3:20; Perumbanarruppadai 29; Silappadikaram VI:55; XI; 148; Tirikadugam Invocation :1; Tirukkural 610.

822 Silappadikaram, XVII: Munnilaipparaval :3; Padarkkaipparaval :1.

823 Paripadal, 3:54-56.

824 Ahahanuru, 220:5.

825 Manimegalai, XXII. 34.

826 Ahananuru, 2209:6.

827 Ibid; 220:5.

828 Manimekalai, XXII: 32, 37, 43 and 76. Since Kagandan ruled from Kavirippumpattinam, that city is called Kagandi Nagaranm.

829 Nilakanta Sastri K.A., Development of Religion in South India, op.cit., p. 32.

believe that Rama is anterior to Krishna. Panini and Patanjali, the early Sanskrit grammarians, did not make a single allusion to Rama, His brothers and Dasaratha but they refer to the Mahabharata characters like Vasudeva, Yudishtira, Arjuna etc. In this connection R.G. Bhandarkar observes, "Even a lexicographer, in his list of synonyms of Vishnu gives a good many names derived from the Krishna incarnation, but the name of Rama, thes on of Dasaratha, does not occur, though Balarama or Balabhadra, the brother of Krishna is mentioned".[830] A.L. Basham also remarks, "For all his later fame, the literature of the period ignores Rama and his father Dasaratha completely".[831] K.A. Nilakanta Sastri's conclusive opinion is that the "religious faith apart, the Ramayana is neither allegory nor history, but poetry resting on mythology".[832] A convincing explanation is given by N. Subrahmanian who stales that the Ramayana must have gained currency much later than the Mahabharata. He adds, "This must be the reason for the dominant places assigned to Krishna and Baladeva and the comparatively obscure and stray references to Rama in the Sangam literature. The historicity and early deification of Krishna are in sharp contrast to Rama a later fashion in popular religion".[833] Even if one may feel that the Sangam material, on Rama is not that scarce and that it is comparatively more than obtainable for Kurma, Varaha or Narasimha, the impression gained certainly is that Rama, now greatly worshipped, was treated just as a distinguished or victorious human and not raised to the level of a god. He had no temple or worship or festival. No Sangam personality bore Rama's name while Kannan was quite a popular name.

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830 Bhandarkar R.G., Early History of the Deccan, Bombay, 1957, p. 17.

831 Basham A.L. The Wonder That was India, op.cit., Vol. I, 39-40.

832 Nilakanta Sastri K.A., History of South India, op.cit., p. 34.

833 Subrahmanian N., Sangam Polity, op.cit., pp. 413-414.

Rama, the conqueror of Ravana,[834] is equated to Tirumal.[835] The very names Raman,[836] Sitai[837] and Ravana[838] occur. Rama is Aruntiral (the mighty);[839] Sita is Madu (woman);[840] and Ravana is Arakkan (demon)[841] as well as Ilangai Kilavan (the Lord of Lanka).[842] Vibishana is Ilangai Kilavarkilaiyon (the younger brother of the Lord of Lanka).[843] Rama's kingdom is Ayotti (Ayodhya).[844] Ravana's is Ilangai (Lanka).[845] Rama proceeded to the forest,[846] as ordained by His father.[847] His wife (Sita)[848] and younger brother (Lakshmana)[849] followed Him. He lost His wife there and was grief-stricken.[850] Ravana, the demon, had abducted Her.[851] On the way, She cast her various jewels which the monkeys found and put on evoking pleasant laughter from the onlookers.[852] Then Rama, the victorious, stilled the disturbing noise of the birds as He sat in council beneath a banyan tree at Kodi

834 Manimekalai, XXVI:53.

835 Silappadikaram, XIV. 48.

836 Ahananuru, 70:15; Palamoli, 92:1; Purananuru, 378:18.

837 Purananuru, 378:18.

838 Manimegalai, XXVII:54.

839 Silappadikaram, XII: 65.

840 Ibid; XIV: 46.

841 Purananuru; 378 : 19

842 Palamoli, 92: 2

843 Ibid;

844 Silappadikaram, XIII:65

845 Palamoli, 92:2; Silappadikaram XVII; Padarkkaipparaval:3; XXVII: 238; Sirupparruppadai 119.

846 Silappadikaram, XIII:64

847 Ibid; XIV:46.

848 Ibid;

849 Silappadikaram, XVIII: Padarkkaipparaval :1.

850 Silappadikaram, XIV:47.

851 Puranauru, 378:19.

852 Ibid; 378:19-22.

(Tiruvanaikkarai) on the southern sea-shore.[853] Was He examining the ways of ending Ravana? This is a news hardly found in the versions of Rama yana prevalent in the Tamil land.[854] Then Rama destroyed the defences of Lanka.[855] Agaligai is mentioned in the Paripadal.[856] It is said that when Kovalan left Puhar, it appeared like Ayotti without Rama.[857]

The Sangam literature rarely mentions the name Balarama as such and generally refers to Him as Valiyon.[858] He was praised and worshipped during the Sangam period, though relegated to the background now. Mayilai Seeni Venkatasami thinks that the worship of Vasudeva (Kannan) and Baladeva (Balarama) was introduced by the Jainas into the Tamil country and was popular during the Sangam Age.[859] But, V. Kanagasabhai Pillai regards that Balarama and Krishna were originally hero-worshipped by the cowherd community and that the Brahmanic influence converted both these gods into Vishnu's incarnations.[860] By the time of the Alvars both had definitely become the incarnations of Vishnu.[861] Balarama is Nambi Mutta Piran, the elder brother of Krishna (Kannan).[862] Hence His names like Tammun, Mayavan Tammun and Mani-vannan

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853 Ahananuru, 70;13-17.

854 Varadaraja Aiyar E.S., A History of Tamil Literature, Madras, 1950, p. 236.

855 Silappadikaram XVII: Padarkkaipparaval :1

856 Paripadal,19:50.

857 Silappadikaram, XIII:64-65.

858 Nattrinai, 32:2 Palaikkali 26:1; Paripadal 2:20; Purananuru 56:12; Silappadikaram, V:171.

859 Further, their names are mentioned in the Neminatha Purana in the Sri Purana of the Jamas (Mayilai Seeni Venkatasami, Palantamilum Palvagai Samayanmum, p. 14 in Arts and Sciences in Ancient Tamil Literature, University of Madras, 1974)

860 Kanagasabhai Pillai V., The Tamils 1800 Years Ago, op.cit., p. 231.

861 Sarangapani R., Paripadal Tiran, p. 151.

862 Manimekalai XIV: y65; Neydarkali 7: 1-2; Paripadal 2:20-21; Silappdikaram XVII: Adunarppugaldal:1; Onranpagudi:1 and 2: Karuppam.

Tammun.[863] The complexion of the two differed the elder white like the sand on the sea-shore and the younger black like the sea. Yet they were one and worshipped together since they performed the very same function of protection.[864] Both are inseparable.[865] Therefore, the garland, jewel, emblem and weapon appropriate to Balarama, belong to Krishna (Tirumal).[866] Balarama is white-complexioned and so He is Vellai (the White).[867] The white bull (vellai) reminds of Bala rama's complexion.[868] Other similarities to His complexion are the jasmine flower,[869] moon,[870] conch,[871] milk,[872] and the frothy water-falls.[873] His names Panira Meniyon[874] and Panira Vannan[875] further confirm His whiteness.

V. Varadachari says that the Paripadal mentions Him as Adisesha in descent.[876] The Silappadikaram calls Him Vellai Nagar.[877] His dress is dark and garland is made of the white Kadappam (Eugenia racemosa) flowers[878] His flag had the palmyra emblem.[879] So,

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863 Reference No. 388.

864 Paripadal 15:11-13.

865 Ibid. 15:65-66; Purananuru 58:14-16.

866 Paripadal 4:38-40.

867 Inna (40) 1:2; Silappadikaram XIV: 9; XVII; Eduttukkattu 11 and 15. Even today the neams Vellaiyan, Vellaichachami etc., are borne by the Tamils, So, P.T. Srinivasa Aiyangar thinks that the Baladeva worship was native to the Tamil land (History of the Tamils p. 204)

868 Mullaikkali 4.8: 5; 11-12.

869 Silappadikaram XXII; Onranpagudi :2.

870 Ibid;1.

871 Paripadal, 1:4-5; 2:20; Purananuru 56:3; Silappadikaram V : 171.

872 Mullaikkali 4:8; Neydarkali 7:2; Palamoli 13:1; Purananuru 58:14.

873 Nattrinai 32:2.

874 Neydarkali,7:2; Palamoli, 13:1; Purananuru, 58:14.

875 Mullaikkali, 4:8.

876 Paripadal, 15:19. Varadachari V., Note on the Religious and Philosophical content of the Paripadal p. 404 (in Ayvukkovai, Annamalainagar, 1971)

877 Silappadikaram, IX:40

878 Paripadal, 4:38-40; 5:55-58

879 Mullaikkali, 4:7; Paripadal 4:22; Purananuru 56:4; 58:14

He is Panaikkodiyon.[880] The elephant also figures on His flag[881] His plough weapon is called either Meli[882] or Nanjil.[883] He wields it in His right hand[884] His names Nanjilan[885] and Nanjilon[886] are derived from the plough weapon. He is called Oru Kulaiyavan[887] and Oru Kulai oruvan[888] because He wears a single ear-ring. Balarama is reputed for His strength.[889]

Krishna (Kannan) was the god of the cowherds.[890] He and His elder brother (Balarama) were the popular gods worshipped in the temples.[891] Krishna is equated to Mal.[892] He is referred to as Mayon,[893] Mayavan,[894]

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880 Paripadal, 2:22; Purananuru, 56:4; 58:14

881 Paripadal,1:4-5.

882 Silapadikaram, XIV:9.

883 Palaikkali, 35:1; Paripadal 1:4-5; Purananuru 56:4.

884 Silappadikaram, XIV. 9.

885 Palaikkali, 35:1.

886 Paripadal, 13:33.

887 Mullaikkali, 2:8; 4:23; 5:11.

888 Palaikkali, 25:1; Paripadal 1:5.

889 Purananuru, 5:12; 57;2-3.

890 Purananuru, 5:12; 57:2-3.

891 Paripadal, 15:49-66.

892 Ahanauru, 59:6

893 Maduraikkanchi, 59; Mullaikkali, 3:55; 8:38; and 53; Nattrinai, 32:1; Paripadal, 3:1, 3 and 10; 15:33; Purananuru 29:2; 57-2; 229-27; Tol Porul. 5:1; 60:9.

894 Silappadikaram, XVII: Adunarppugaldal :1; Eduttukkattu:11, 14 and 19; Karuppam; Onranpagudi:2, Padarkkaipparval : 2; Pattu:1, 3 and 7.

Kariyavan,[895] Kariyon,[896] Anjana Vannan,[897] Manivannan[898] and Kadal Vannan.[899] His association with the Jumna (Yamuna or Tolunai) is noticeable in His name Tolunaitturaivan[900] He is praised as Tuvarai Vendu the King of Dvaraka).[901] His foster-mother is called Asodaiyar (Yasoda).[902] Kamsan is His Maman (maternal uncle).[903] Kamsan is also called Kanjan.[904] Arjuna is Krishna's Maittunar (brother-in-law).[905] Krishna's boyhood life is Vala Saritai (Balacharitha in the Bhagavata)[906] He ate the butter which he stole in the houses of the cowherds.[907] Yasoda tied His hands with the rope used for churning curd[908] Krishna is noted for playing the flute.[909] Elaborate description of His performing the Kuravaikkuttu is found in the Aichchiyar Kuravai.[910] Balarama and Nappinnai joined Him in this dance[911] The Eru Manram (the place for drying cow dung cakes by exposure to Sun) in Dvaraka was the location of this dance performance.[912] The cowherdesses played the Kuravai in honour of Krishna with the exploits of Tirumal

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895 Silappadikaram, XVII. Padarkkaipparaval. 3.

896 Bharatam: Marankelu :8.

897 Purananuru, 174:5

898 Manimegalai, XIX : 65.

899 Manimegalai XXVII : 98: Silapadikaram XVII: Onranpagudi:1; XXVI: 238

900 Silappadikaram, XVII Pattu : 3.

901 Bharatam, Marankelu :2.

902 Silappadikaram, XVI:16; XVII: Adunarppugaldal :3 Munnilaipparaval :1

903 Silappadikaram, XII: 163.

904 Silappadikaram, VI: 46; XVII: Padarkkaipparaval :3.

905 Bharatam, Nanmaruppu:5.

906 Silappadikaram, XVII : Karuppam.

907 Ibid; XVII : Munnilaipparaval : 2.

908 Ibid; XVII : Munnilaipparaval :1

909 Ibid; XVII : Pattu ; 1, 2 and 3.

910 Canto, XVII in Silappadikaram.

911 Manimekalai, XIV: 65-66 Silappadikaram, XVII: Adunarppugaldal; 1 and 2 karuppam.

912 Silappadikaram, XVII : Adunaruppugaldal : 4: Karuppam.

and Krishna as the theme.[913] Krishna stealthily took away the garments of the going for a bath in the Jumna.[914] and on seeing Balarama passing that way Krishna bent and lowered the branch of the Kurundam tree[915] obviously to avoid embarrassment to those hapless maidens and to enable them to cover themselves with the foliage of that tree. This incident yielded the anmes like Kurundosittan[916] and Kurundositta Mayavan[917] to Krishna.

Successfully escaping all the wily attempts at murder, Krishna killed Kamsan ultimately.[918] Kamsan sent some Mallar (wrestlers) to kill his infant nephew who destroyed them all.[919] Kamsan sent an asura to kill Krishna. That asura approached Krishna in the guise of an elephant. Krishna broke his tusk, destroyed him and performed the Alliyam dance.[920] Krishna kicked Sakadasuran (an asura in the garb of a cart) to death.[921] Another asura assumed the form of a calf and approached Krishna with malicious intentions. Thereupon, Krishna lifted the calf up and struck it against the Vilamaram (wood apple tree) which is said to be another asura. Thus the calf was killed and the Vilamaram was felled.[922] As Krishna remained tied to the ural (the large stone mortar), He saw the double Marudam trees (two asuras). He crawled towards them dragging along the ural. He passed through the two Marudam trees and felled them.[923]

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913 Canto XVII in Silappadikaram.

914 Silappadikaram, XVII : Adunarppugaldal : 1, 2, 3.

915 Ahananru, 59: 3-6This episode occurs in the Sivaka Chintamani (St. 209) also.

916 Silappadikaram, XVII: Kuttul Padutal, P 5.

917 Ibid; XVII : Pattu : 3.

918 Ibid; XVII. Padarkkaipparaval : 3.

919 Aintina, (50). 1:1; Kurinjikkali 16:5; Neydarkali, 17:1.

920 Silappadikaram, VI : 46-48.

921 Ibid; XII: 164; Tirikadugam: Invocation :3.

922 Ibid; XVII: Pattu : 1.

923 Ibid; XII : Uraippattumadai: 2. This act of Krishna is spoken of as that of Aiyai here.

Another episode deals with Krishna felling a Kurundam tree said to be an asura in that form.[924] Ulai(Usha), the daughter of Vanan (Banasura), aspired to marry Aniruddha, the son of Kaman. As a result, Aniruddha was confined at So, the fort-town of Vanan. Thereupon, Krishna (Vasudeva) resorted to retrieve Aniruddha. Krishna sacked So, and triumphed over Vanan.[925] On that occasion Krishna performed the Kudam (pot) dance in the streets of the So town.[926] At that time Kaman is also said to have danced the Pediyadal in the attire of a woman.[927] While strangling Vanan, the victorious Krishna performed another dance called Mallinadal.[928] Krishna's services to the Pandavas are famous. He went to the court of the Kauravas as their envoy.[929] He functioned as Arjuna's charioteer during the Mahabharata war and earned the name Maninirappagan (the sapphire-complexioned teer).[930]

There are a few legends that extol Tirumal's exploits. The terrifying horde of avunar (the demoniac enemies of the gods) was conquered by Tirumal.[931] During the war between the Gods and the avunar, the latter hid the sun thereby plunging the entire world into utter darkness. So, the dusky Tirumal restored the sun and dispelled the darkness engulfing the world.[932] Tirumal sent the disc weapon against the avunar. It hit their elephants on the fore-head and the terror-stricken avunar fled.[933] The heads of

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924 Ibid; XVII: Pattu : 3; Ulvari Valttu; 1; Tirikadugam: Invocation :2.

925 Nanamnikkadigai: Invocation :2; 2:2; Silappadikaram XVII: Padarkkaipparaval :1.

926 Manimekalai XI : 7; XXIX ; 390 and 457; Paripadal 3:83; Silapadikaram XI: 54-55.

927 Silappadikaram, VI : 57.

928 Ibid; VI : 49.

929 Ibid; XVII: Munnilaipparaval:3; Padarkkaipparaval:3.

930 Bharatam, Nanamaruppu:3.

931 Maduraikkanchi, 590-591: Paripadal, 2:36-49.

932 Purananuru,174:1-5.

933 Neydarkali, 16:1-3.

the avunar rolled like the pal-myraseeds during the operation of the disc weapon.[934] Kundal (Kesin) was a demon who took the form of a horse and fought Tirumal (Mayon Tirumal killed Kundal.[935] The Kalittogai says that Tirumal killed him by tearing off the mouth.[936] And the Paripadal applies the name Kundal to both the killer and the killed. V. Varadachari has the following to state in this connection: "In one context, however, a mistake seems to have crept in Paripadal (3:31-32). The demon whom Mayon killed was called Kesin. The Lord won the appellation Kesava. The word Kesa which means hair on the head does not appear to have formed part of the word Kesin while referring to the demon. Or it is quite possible that the Tamil author finds a reference to the thick hair on the head of the demon who assumed the form of the horse while he came rushing to attack Mayon."[937] It may be noted that Kundal, or for that matter Kesin, is just a name for that demon. Whether he had hair on the head or not is immaterial, just as blind or otherwise one might possess the name Tamaraikkannan. It may even be granted that Kesa has nothing to do with Kesin. In this context, Tirumal (Mayon) got the name Kundal because He destroyed the demon of that name. That is all. Perhaps Kundal was the Tamil original and later on Sanskritised as Kesin or Kesava. The Kadamba tree, usually connected with Murugan, is linked with Tirumal also occasionally.[938] The commentary on the Silappadikaram alludes to Tirumal destroying a Kadambu in the ocean.[939] It is said that Tirumal churned the Milk Ocean using the mythological snake (Vasuki) as a rope. So, earned the name Kadal Kadaindan.[940] The resultant nectar was

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934 Paripadal, 2:40-49.

935 Ibid; 3 : 31-32.

936 Mullaikali, 3:54-55.

937 Varadachari V., Op.cit., pp.404-405.

938 Paripadal, 4:67.

939 Commentary on the Silappadikaram XVII : Ulvari Valttu: 9; XXIX ; Vallaippattu: 13.

940 Silappadikaram XVII : Munnilaipparaval : 1.

distributed by Him among the gods.[941] But He left out the asurar entirely in His list.[942] Certain legends, however, defy comprehension of their real import and the circumstances necessitating their rise. It is said that Tirumal ate up the world.[943] It is not known if this refers to His embodying all the worlds or to His munching the mud as Kannan and then opening His mouth to show that 'everything' was weil inside His throat, or to what else. Tirumal is said to have hidden the Sun with His disc.[944] It is not known for what purpose. His descent as a male-swan and the drying up of the torrential cosmic deluge by spreading out His feathers are mentioned.[945] Tirumal was the saviour of the Moon from being devoured by the snake.[946]

Philosophy

Philosophical thought relating to Vaishnavism is a rarity in the Sangam literature. Of course, stray metaphysical ideas occur here and there. Yet, "most of the poems never have direct touch or deal with philosophy."[947] The Sangam Tamils attained brilliant academic and commercial distinction. But "they contributed practically nothing to metaphysical speculation of the type of the Upanishads. Their religion did not mature any philosophical system and they had no elaborate mythology of their own. But it was not a natural deficiency of the Tamils. They simply had not thought about that aspect of things. But once it was brought home to them, it was they that spread the light later on

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941 Ibid; XVII : Pattu : 2.

942 Paripadal, 3 : 33-34.

943 Silappadikaram, XVII : Onranpagudi : 1.

944 Ibid.

945 Paripadal, 3 : 25-26.

946 Mullaikkali, 4 : 37-38, Perumbanarruppadai 383-384. The snake was Rahu, the shadow cast on the Moon eclipse Subramanian N., Pre-Pallavan Tamil Index, p. 52.

947 Sathiyamoorthy S., Impact of some philosphic Thought in Sangam Literature, Annamalai-nagar, 1971, p.481

throughout India through the Bhakti movement led by the Alvars and the Nayanmars and the great philosophical systems of the succeeding centuries, propounded by intellectual giants like Sankara, Ramanuja and Meykandar."[948] Vaishnavism did not take complete shape during the Sangam Age. But Tirumal was worshipped as an important deity among others. His antiquity and greatness were regarded as beyond comprehension.[949] It is said that Tirumal is reputed for fame.[950] Nevertheless, even the Vainava Vadi in the Manimekalai had not much to dilate upon Vaishnava Philosophy. In the case of the Paripadal, "it is a happy and healthy blending of the traditions"[951] says V. Varadachari and "it shows the influence of the Vedic thoughts in those very early days"[952] says N. Kanagaraja Aiyar. Moreover, K. P. Ratnam finds the thoughts of the Bhagavat Gita in the Paripadal songs on Tirumal.[953] B.V. Ramanujam unequivocally mentions the gradual spread of the Aryan concepts and modes of worship in the Tamil land and notices the performance of sacrifices referred to in the works like the Padirruppattu.[954] Tirumal is connected with every aspect of the sacrifice[955] and His liking for the sacrifice is noted.[956] He is praised as Veda Mudalvan[957] and Vedattu Marai.[958]

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948 Subrahmanian N., Sangam Polity, Op.cit., p. 384.

949 Paripadal, 2 : 17-18; 3 : 46

950 Purananuru, 56 : 13; 57 : 2.

951 Varadavhari V., Op.cit., p.402.

952 Kanagaraja Aiyar N., Vedic Thoughts in Sangam Literature, Calcutta, 1968, p.55.

953 Ratnam K.P., Paripadalum Bhavat Gitaiyum, Sentamil Selvi, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 128 ff.

954 Ramanujam B.V., Op.cit., p. 127.

955 Paripadal, 2 : 61-66.

956 Ibid; 13 : 56.

957 Narrinai : Invocation : 6.

958 Paripadal, 3 : 66.

The cardinal philosophical tenets of Vaishnavism as noticed in the Sangam works may be set forth herebelow. Tirumal has innumerable forms.[959] All the same He has no specific form and takes the form that His devotees visualise.[960] There is no birth that He has not taken, but no one created Him.[961] He is hard to realise and specify.[962] His emergence is in water.[963] He is all pervasive.[964] Therefore, He is Omnipresent; is everything; is in everything; is all implications; and is immanent in all gods that are worshipped.[965] His primacy makes Him assume the abodes, flags and weapons of other gods.[966] Yet He could be a servant to His true devotees.[967] He has neither friends nor foes, and neither relatives nor others.[968] He is Lord of all the gods and the inimical demons as well.[969] Hence His impartiality He is the truth par excellence.[970] Tirumal is the creator of everything and is immanent in everything which reveals the creative aspect of the Lord.[971] This lends support to the doctrine that God is both the material and instrumental cause for all efforts.[972] In the lines 1 to 16 of the 2nd song in the Paripadal, the process of creation is described in a legendary manner. From the Lord the sky (formless) emanated at first and then wind from the sky, water from the wind and earth from the water indicating the initiation of creation. The very long duration intervening

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959 Ibid; 3 : 44-45.

960 Ibid; 4 : 56.

961 Ibid; 3 : 72.

962 Ibid; 1 : 34-35.

963 Ibid; 4 : 30. Since the name Narayana is from water, according to the commentator.

964 Nattrinai: Invocation : 5; Paripadal 3 : 34-35; 13 : 14-24.

965 Paripadal, 2 : 59; 3 : 68-70; 4 : 25-35 and 66-70.

966 Ibid; 4 : 36-42 and 66-70; 15 : 56-61.

967 Ibid; 4 : 72.

968 Ibid; 3 : 56-58, 4 : 53-55.

969 Ibid; 3 : 54-55.

970 Ibid; 2 : 54; 3 : 64.

971 Ibid; 3 : 40; 4-0 : 25-35.

972 Varadachari V., Op.cit., p.402.

one stage of creation and the next as well as the lack-lustre condition of the Sun and the Moon during the deluge are the note-worthy features in the process described. In the lines 77 to 80 of the 3rd song in the Paripadal in praise of Tirumal, the commentator Parimelalagar notices the Sankhya philosophy. The 25 principles of the Sankhya system are given as follows :

Pal (Zero, barrenness)	:	Purusha (soul)	... 1
Kal (germs)	:	Pancha Bhutas namely ether, air, light, water and earth	... 5
Pagu (Classification)	:	Karmendriyas namely mouth, feet, hands and the organs of evacuation and reproduction	... 5
Onru (one)	:	Sound	
Irandu (two)	:	Touch	
Munru (three)	:	Colour	
Nangu (four)	:	Taste	
Aindu (five)	:	Smell	Tanmatras or Aimpulan or Subtle elements ... 5
Aru (six)	:	Gnanendriyas namely skin, tongue, eyes, nose, ears and mind (means)	... 6
Elu (Seven)	:	Aankara (self-sense)	... 1
Ettu (Eight)	:	Man (buddhi, intellect)	... 1

Tondu	:	Onbadu (nine) : Prakriti	
		(the Primoridial Matrix)	... 1
		Total	**25**

In his commentary on the Paripadal, Parimelalagar refers only to the evolution of the Tanmatras and the origin of the Pancha Bhutas. But, in his commentary on the 27th couplet of the Tirukkural, he attempts the evolution according to the Sankhya system thus: "The conscious Purusha has no origin and brings forth nothing. Prakriti which has no origin of its own brings out Buddhi. From Buddhi arises, Ahankara, Ahankara begets Tanmatras, which in turn give rise to Manas, Gnanendriyas, Karmendriyas and Pancha Bhutas." S. Sathiya-moorthy wonders that in the Paripadal the pre-Christian and pro-Vedic but atheistic Sankhya system is connected with God by stating that all through the yugas. Tirumal would remain in high position pursued by these twenty-five principles.[973] "It is difficult to understand the precise significance of the Sankhya account of evolution, and we have not seen any satisfactory explanation as to why the different steps of evolution are what they are."[974] However, "we know that some time before the third century, there was a theistic Sankhya work known as Sashti Tantra Sastra, some description of which is found in the Pancharatra and the Ahirbu-dhnya Samhita... somewhat resembling the theistic Sankhya view of the Bhagavata Purana. There is great divergence of opinion among the various schools of Sankhya regarding the order and manner of the evolution, of these categories The Sankhya-Yoga and the Vedanta have practically influenced not only the various forms of Hindu religious literature, such as the Puranas, the Tantras, the Mahabharata, the Gita and the Pancharatra and other sectarian literatures related to them, but also many of the Buddhist Tantras. The idea of the conjoined Prakriti and Purusha has also influenced various forms of worship, art and

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973 Sathiyamoorthy S., Op.cit., p.483, Kapila was an incarnation of Vishnu (Vide Satvata Samhita XII; Ahirbudhnya Samhita LXVI; Garuda Purana I : 202; and Bhagavata Purana I : 3)

974 Radhakrishnan S., Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 274.

iconography."[975] "The Sankhya doctrine of Puru sha and Prakriti also appears to have considerably influenced the conception of Lakshmi as the consort of Vishnu as well as of Devi the consort of Siva."[976]

Creation, Protection and Destruction are all Tirumals functions.[977] All life starts from Him and reaches Him ultimately.[978] Still, He is the protective god par excellence,[979] a role He has assumed willingly. His function as the Protector is explicit in the expression Naranan Kappu.[980] Under His umbrella of Aru (grace) and sceptre of Aram (dharma) He protects all the worlds.[981] In this connection it may be noted that Krishna is said to have taken the form of the Chera, Chola and Pandya monarchs and ruled over the three Tamil Kingdoms.[982] Equation of the King with Tirumal is a vogue, since both offered protection. It reminds one of Nammalvar's remark that seeing the king tantamounts to seeing Tirumal Himself.[983] That the ancient Tamils were aware of the Pancharatra doctrines is clear from the Paripadal.[984] The principles of Paratvam, Vyuham, Vibhavam, Antaryamitvam and Archai are noticeable in the Pancharatra system. The state of Tirumal at Paramapadam (Vaikuntam) is meant by Paratvam. Turakkam[985] and Tamaraikkannan Ulagu[986] refer to that. Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are the four Vyuhas of Tirumal. As the Vyuhas, He reigns

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975 Surendranath Dasgupta, Introduction, The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. III, pp. 13-16.

976 Sircar D.C., Early History of Vaishnavism, p. 139 (in The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol III).

977 Paripadal, 4 : 33-36.

978 Ibid; 1 : 4-7.

979 Tirumurugarruppadai, 161.

980 Manimegalai XXVII : 99.

981 Paripadal, 3; 74-76.

982 Silappadikaram, XVII : Ulvari Valttu : 1-3.

983 Nammalvar, Tiruvaymoli: 34:8. He equates them because both passes Tiru.

984 Subramanian N., History of Tamilnad (-1336 A.D.), p. 381; S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, A History of Tirupati, Vol. I, p. 199; Jagadeesan N, Sri Vaishnavism in the Tamil Country (post-Ramanuja), p. 9.

985 Paripadal, 15 : 16.

986 Tirukkural, 1103.

supreme, creating, protecting and destroying the world by turns. Kari (the dark Vasudeva or Krishna), Vellai (the white Sankarshana or Balarama), Sempon Mai (the reddish Pradyumna or Kaman) and Pachchai (Aniruddha)[987] refer to the aforesaid Vyuhas. Vibhavam means the Avataras (incarnations) which have been noticed already. Antaryamitvam is the immanence of Tirumal. As an Antaryamin He is heat in the fire; fragrance in the flower; light in the gem; truth in the word; and so on.[988] This, exposes the pervasive nature of Tirumal. The invocatory verse to the Narrinai tells that He keeps all that has come into being in Himself. Then, He would protect everything even during the final deluge. Arena is the worship of the idols wherein God is believed to exist. At the Alagarmalai temple, both Krishna and Balarama were worshipped[989] in the form of idols. The Ashtakshara Mantra called the Ettu (the eight letter mantra, Om Namo Narayanaya) is given Vedic connection.[990] Its efficacy was known. That is why, the tongue that utters not the name Narayana is spoken of with derision.[991]

Nomenclature

The nomenclature among the ancient Tamils is an interesting phenomenon deserving careful notice. By and large gods' names were not borne by the humans of- the Sangam times. Only some have been named after the Gods. Even among them a good number had Kannan as either the basic or full name.[992] The names like Karikkannanar and Senkannanar may be deemed to be Vaishnavite. Ilam Kannar (author

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987 Paripadal, 3 : 81.

988 Ibid; 1 : 45-46; 3 : 63-68; 4 : 25-32.

989 Ibid; 15 : 65-66.

990 Silappadikaram, XI : 128-129.

991 Ibid; XVII : Padarkkaiparaval : 3. That derision is extended to the ear that hears not His greatness as well as the eye that either sees Him not or blinks while seeing Him.

992 For instance, Kannanar, a poet (Kuruntogai 244); Kannanar son of Sendan (Ahananuru 350); Kannanar of Kumattur (Padirruppattu II Ten); Tirukkannan, a Chola general (Purananuru 174); Kannan Elini, ruler of Mudukunram (Ahananuru 197); Kuttuvan Kannan, a poet (Kuruntogai 179); Karikkannanar, a poet (Ahananuru 107, 123, 258; Narrinai 237); Senkannanar, a poet (Ahananuru 103, 271; Nattrinai 387).

of St. 250 in the Kuruntogai) may mean either the younger brother of Kannar or the Tamil form of Balakrishna. So also in the case of Ilam Kannanar (author of St. 264 in the Ahananuru). Pal vanna Tevan is a sure indication of Balarama (Baladeva) and it occurs in the name of Idaiyala Nattu Manakkudaiyan Pal Vanna Tevan Villavataraiyan who prepared a Payiram to the Ahananuru. Kesavanar and Nallachchudanar had Vishnu's names but sang the praises of Murugan in the Paripadal. Damodaranar (author of St. 92 in the Kuruntogai) is another Vaishnava name of those times. The author of the Kalavali Narpadu was Poigaiyar. He is different from Poigai Alvar of the post-Sangam period. Naming of persons invariably after gods was perhaps a post-Sangam development. It is worth noticing that even the first three Alwars did not assume any one of the names of Tirumal. But Perialvar outspokenly advocated the assumption of

Tirumal's names. He says that the mother who named her son after Narayana would not enter the hell.[993]

Asceticism

A certain order of ascetics finds mention as Mukkorpagavar (Mukkol Andanar) in the Sangam literature.[994] Mukkol stands for the three-pronged staff. So, they were denoted the Tridan-dins. But the Ekadandins (unistaffed ascetics) are not mentioned at all in the Sangam works. "The Mukkorpagavar who were perhaps the Ajivikas in the South went about with their Tridan-das as their name indicates. The medieval commentator Nachchi-narkkiniyar explains the Tridanda as indicating a faith in the unity or identity of Hari, Haran and Ayan."[995] "It is also possible to confuse Bagava in Mukkorpagavar with Bhagavata. If both Bagava and Bhagavata are derived from the common root Bhaga (that which is pervasive or immanent), it might be imagined that the Jainas and the Vaishnavas recognised common religious factors."[996] M. Monier-Williams says that the Tridanda denotes control over thought, words and actions.[997] He quotes Manu in support.[998] In the later day Hinduism, it is well known that the Sri Vaishnava ascetics carried a Tridanda while Advaita (Smarta) ascetics an Ekadanda.

Worship

Reference to Gods by complexion is a sure indication of the prevalence of idol worship in the Sangam Age. The practice of controlling the senses and passing through

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993 Perialvar Tirumoli, 4. 6. 4.

994 Neydarkali 9 : 4; Mullaipattu 38.

995 Jagadeesan N., History of Sri Vaishnavism in the Tamil Country, (post Ramanuja), Madurai, 1977, p. 151.

996 Ibid; p. 257, F. N. 107.

997 Monier Williams M., **Indian Wisdom,** p. 133, F, N. 3.

998 Manu, 12. 10. 11.

the different stages of meditation was a form of worship.[999] This is perhaps a reference to a type of yoga and might not have involved the worship of idol. This was not meant for all. For all other references indicate idol worship. The worship of Tirumal's feet was common.[1000] Obeisance was made several times at His feet.[1001] His feet were thought of as mother[1002] and also as ending the series of births.[1003] Laying the head at the feet of the image while taking a vow was a practice.[1004] Worship of the feet of the Lord is common even today, but it is interesting to note that obeisance was made to His chest also.[1005] His chest, denoted as Tiruvarai-yagalam, is the seat of Tiru (Lakshmi). In the Perumal temples, even today, the worship at the Tayar (goddess) shrine precedes that at the Lord's. This implies that Her grace is sought before approaching the Lord: That is because She is the Mediatrix. In the Sri Vaishnava parlance, it is known as the Purushakara principle. The mentioned reference perhaps has links with it. But, Tiruvaraiyagalam may just mean the holy mountain housing Tirumal's shrine. In that case, it was the mountain that was worshipped. Making obeisance by turning towards the direction of the Alagarmalai is spoken of as so much efficacious as worshipping Tirumal Himself[1006] Perhaps circumambulation of the Alagarmalai also prevailed."[1007]

The devotee offered prayers to the Lord in the company of his close relatives.[1008] That is, the family as a group performed worship. Before entry into the temple physical

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999 Paripadal, 4: 1-4.

1000 Padittruppattu 31 : 9 Paripadap 1 : 65-68; 2 : 72.

1001 Paripadal 13 : 61-62.

1002 Ibid; 13:61.

1003 Ibid; 3:2.

1004 Mullaikkali, 8 : 55-56; Paraipadal Tirattu 1:5-6.

1005 Paripadal, 13: 11-13.

1006 Ibid; 15:46-48.

1007 Silappadikaram, XI : 105.

1008 Paripadal, 1:65-68; 2:75; 15:46-48; Paripadal Tirattu 1:80-82.

purification was done by bathing in the temple tank.[1009] The details of the worship of Vishnu are indicated in the Padittruppattu[1010]: "The devotees assembled with their hands folded and raised a chorus about Tirumal. As the temple bells sounded, the fasting devotees took bath in the cool waters of the temple tank. Then they returned and fell at the feet of Tirumal who wielded the disc and wore the basil garlands. After that they went back home fully satisfied that their vows were fulfilled." This points out that the devotees fasted to invoke the Lord's grace. Womenfolk decorated themselves with jewels and cosmetics and went to the temple along with their husbands and young children.[1011] While going to the temple the devotees carried fragrant flowers for adorning the deity, incenses for burning at the altar and aromatic items like sandal.[1012] Cooked items were also taken as offerings to the Lord.[1013] To the Kaman temple, milk was taken as an offering.[1014]

The devotees sought fulfilment of their desires during the worship. These included a life devoid of agonies[1015] and the proximity to the Lord.[1016] The latter resembles the principle of Samibhya. In the St.5 of the Mullaikkali the cowherds are said to worship Tirumal so that He might bestow milch cows on them. They also asked for protection from possible sufferings indicated by evil omens. During the worshiping the hands raised above the head with both palms brought together is a manner of salutation.[1017] It is said that one take shelter at the Lord's feet by bowing and with

[1009] Silappadikaram, VI : 57.

[1010] Padirruppattu, 31 : 1-10.

[1011] Maduraikkanchi, 461-466; Paripadal Tirattu 1 : 60-63.

[1012] Kurinjipattu, 5-7; Maduraikkanchi, 461-462.

[1013] Paripadal Tirattu, 1: 44-45.

[1014] Mullaikali, 9: 19-20.

[1015] Paripadal, 1: 75-76.

[1016] Ibid; 1 : 62-65; Paripadal Tirattu 1 : 79-82.

[1017] Kurunjippattu 209; Maduraikkanchi 619; Mullaipattu 10-11; Nedunalvadai 43; Padirruppattu 31:3.

palms.[1018] Prostration was another method of Salutation.[1019] Music accompanied the worship.[1020] The cowherdess Tirumal's glories and played the Kuravaikkuttu worship.[1021] The cowherds worshipped Kaman, the son Tirumal, as a pastoral deity.[1022] The institution of controlling the bull (Eru Taluvudal) or bull-baiting was well known The cowherds gave their daughters in marriage to the youths who controlled the bulls with success.[1023] This was in imitation of Krishna arrying Nappinnai after controlling seven bulls. As a prelude to the joyful wedding in the pastoral region the Kuravai dance associated with the name of the Lord was performed.[1024]

Temples

Since Tirumal is immanent all places are His sacred centres and it is futile to particularise the places of His pre sence.[1025] However, for the benefit of His devotees He is assigned temples in certain places. The Sri Vaishnava tradition counts 108 sacred centres for Him. The Sangam, literature does not enumerate all of them. The Alagarmalai, Puhar Venkatam, Vehka, and Adangamadam are some prominent places mentioned in this regard. The conception of the three postures of Tirumal appears to be quite ancient are His Kidanda Vannam (the reclined state), Irunda Vannam (the seated state) and Ninra Vannam (the standing state). The Sangam works often refer to His reclined state. The Aravanai (the serpent couch) and Arituyil (Yoga Nitra) are associated with this state. At Venkatam He stands. He is addressed as Malaimisai

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1018 Paripadal, 1 : 62-65.

1019 Ibid; 2 : 72-76.

1020 Mullaikkali, 6 : 48-50.

1021 Aichchiyar Kuravai, Canto XVII in the Silappadikaram.

1022 Nachchinarkkiniyar’s commentary on Mullaikkali 9:19-20.

1023 Silappadikaram, XVII : Pattu : 2-7.

1024 Mullaikkali, 2 : 34-35.

1025 Paripadal, 3 : 68-70.

Ninran at the Alagarmalai. Irundaiyur represents His sitting posture. Moreover, the Sangam Tamils worshipped Krishna and Balarama in the temples assigned to them.

"The Nemimalai (Chakravalagiri), beyond the ken of human knowledge and intelligence, holds the world intact amidst the sheet of water. Such highly famed mountains are many. A few among them mitigate human sufferings and offer wholesome and eternal benefits. Even among them only very few mountains, clad with clouds at the top and having flower bedecked ponds, are dear to gods. Among such mountains the tall and grandiose-looking Irum Kunram houses Krishna and Baladeva. It is a heaven that is hard to attain."[1026] The Alagarmalai had names like Tiruvarai,[1027] Irum Kunram,[1028] Tirumal Kunram[1029] and Palamudir Solai.[1030] Being the great hill belonging to Ai (Tirumal), it is called Ai Irum Kunram.[1031] Perhaps Tirumal Irum Solaimalai was a later day appellation for this mountain. Beautiful description of the route to the Alagarmalai and its environs is seen in the Silappadikaram.[1032] It was the seat of both Krishna (Vasudeva) and Balarama (Sankarshana).[1033] Tirumal at the Alagarmalai was Onguyar Malaiyattu Uyarndon.[1034] In both the Alagar malai and Venkatam there are competitive stories about their originally belonging to Murugan. The Silappadikaram mentions a holy tank near the Alagarmalai called Punniya Saravanam,[1035] which is reminiscent of Murugan. Adagamadam means the golden temple and is identified as

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1026 Ibid; 15 : 1-17.

1027 Ibid; 13-12.

1028 Ibid; 15:17, 23, 25, 35, 45, 53 and 65.

1029 Silappadikaram, XI : 91.

1030 Tirumurugarruppadai, 317.

1031 Paripadal, 15: 26.

1032 Silappadikaram, VI : 91-159.

1033 Paripadal, 15 : 56.

1034 Sillapadikaram, XI : 103.

1035 Ibid; 41-46.

Tiruvanantapuram by Arumpada commentator,[1036] though he suggests that some might regard it as Ravipuram. The priest in that temple was called Sedakkudumbi,[1037] and the remains of the offerings to god was Sedam.[1038] Srirangam, the temple par excellence of the Sri Vaishnavas, is called Arangam,[1039] Nadu[1040] and Turutti.[1041] These are geographical names of places formed as islands in the middle of the flowing rivers. In such islands Tirumal is stationed. In Srirangam, the reclined state of Tirumal on Adisesha is likened to blue cloud lying on a golden mountain.[1042] Since Srirangam is mentioned in the context of Uraiyur the proximity of the two places is known. The Silappadikaram relates Kovalan's reaching of Uraiyur after crossing the Kaviri. So, Uraiyur's location on the southern bank of the Kaviri is gathered. Uraiyur, now one of the 108 Sri Vaishnava sacred centres, is not explicitly named as Tirumal's place in the Sangam works.

Puhar (Kavirppumpattinam) was a place of many temples. The Valiyon temple for Balarama[1043] was called Vellai Nagar Kottam[1044] also. Tirumal had the Nediyon Koil there.[1045] Krishna's temple was the Manivannan Kottam.[1046] Kaman was worshipped at the Kamavel Kottam in Puhar.[1047] In Madurai, Balarama had a temple called the Vellai Nagaram.[1048] Irundaiyur,[1049] on the Vaigai and near Kudal (Madurai), is called Nagar

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1036 Padirruppattu, 31 : 9; Silappadikaram XI : 35-40.

1037 Silappadikaram, XXX : 52.

1038 Ibid; XXVI : 63.

1039 Ibid; XI : 6.

1040 Paripadal, 2 : 25; 4 : 67.

1041 Silappadikaram, XI : 39; XIII : 161; XIV : 73.

1042 Ibid; XI : 35-40.

1043 Ibid; V : 171-172.

1044 Ibid; IX : 10.

1045 Ibid; V : 171-172.

1046 Manimegalai XIX : 65; Silappadikaram X : 9-10; XVI : 50.

1047 Silappadikaram, IX : 60.

1048 Ibid; XIV : 9.

1049 Paripadal Tirattu, 1 : 3-5.

Nagar.[1050] Here Tirumal is in the sitting posture. So, He is Amarnda Selvan. The Arumpada commentator calls Him Irunda Valamudaiyar.[1051] Possibly Irundaiyur is a variant of Irunda Ur. Kulavay, near Madurai, had a temple for Adisesha.[1052] People thronged that place with all gaiety and devotion.[1053] Vehka, near Kanchi, had a temple for Tirumal in the reclined position.[1054] Venkatam, the most popular among the 108 Sri Vaishnava sacred centres, is called Nediyon Kunram.[1055] Tirumal in Venkatam is likened to a blue cloud clad with the lightning as the new garment and the rainbow as the ornament and standing aloft that mountain.[1056] Tankal appears only as a prefix to the names of the Sangam poets like Attireyan Senkannanar and Putkollanar. Tankal is also known as Tiruttan-kal and at present counted among the 108 Sri Vaishnava sacred centres. Dvaraka, the birth place of Krishna, was known to the Sangam Tamils as Kuvarai.[1057] The Parkadal[1058] is the puranic Milk Ocean. It is just mentioned as the Kadal also.[1059] Amudam (nectar) is churned out of it.[1060] Tirumal is said to be in the reclined posture on the serpent couch there.[1061]

Festivals and Nonbus

[1050] Ibid; 1 : 59.

[1051] Arumpada commentary on Silappadikaram XVIII : 4.

[1052] Paripadal Tirattu, 1 : 63.

[1053] Ibid; 1 : 64-76.

[1054] Perumbanarruppadai, 373.

[1055] Silappadikaram, VIII : 1.

[1056] Ibid; XI : 41-51.

[1057] Bharatam; Marankelu' : 4; Silappadikaram XVII : Ulvari Valttu : 3.

[1058] Paripadal, 13 : 26.

[1059] Silappadikaram, XVII : Pattu : 2.

[1060] Ibid; XVII : Pattu : 2.

[1061] Mullaikkali, 5 : 71-72.

The celebration of festivals and nonbus was part of the religious activities of the Sangam Tamils. On the day of Onam, Tirumal's natal star,[1062] a special festival took place. During the wintry month of Tai (January-February) in the early hours of every morning the girls observed the nonbu by taking bath in the cold water in the tank.[1063] "This is now being done in the month of Margali evidently as a result of the tradition started by the Tirupavai and Tiruvempavai."[1064] In Panguni (March-April), Panguni Vilavu was celebrated at Urandai (Uraiyur) on the banks of the Kaviri.[1065] During this festival people reached the groves in the adjacent Srirangam in the Kaviri and indulged in festivities including feasts.[1066] Kaman festival was held in Madurai during the spring season,[1067] in the month of Panguni. The feast on that occasion was Venil[1068] "In Hinduism, Kaman nonbu has the ultimate goal of achieving salvation through the worship of Tirumal."[1069]

Vaishnavism and Arts

"Sculpture, like all arts, was closely bound up with religion and took the form of representing divine shapes and forms... To judge from the literary descriptions in the Sangam poems, even the images and temples of less durable material than stone must have been forms of great beauty and bright colour, very well beloved of the people of

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[1062] Maduraikkanchi, 591.

[1063] Nattrinai, 80 : 7-9.

[1064] Subramanian N., Sangam Polity, op.cit., p. 379.

[1065] Nattrinai 234 : 8.

[1066] Ahananuru, 137 : 6-11. The Panguni Uttiram festival was famous at Uraiyur (Iraiyanar Ahapporul commentary on Sutram 16) and is yet quite popular.

[1067] Marudakkali 27 : 65-68; Silappadikaram XIV : 111-112.

[1068] Marudakkali, 27 : 28.

[1069] Seethalakshmi V., Kaman Nonbu in Papers on Tamil Studies, I.I.T.S., Madras, 1980, p. 226. The Jainas celebrated it to get their desires fulfilled but the Buddhists regarded Kaman an evil force and did not observe it. The post-sangam works like the Nachchiyar Tirumoli (poems 1 and 6) and Perunkadai (36:40) speak much about Kaman Nonbu. The name Kanni Nonbu came into vogue as it was performed by the virgins.

the land."[1070] The image of Kaman was called Madanappavai.[1071] The Sangam Tamils painted the animate, inanimate and the divine beings.[1072]

The figure of Tirumagal was either carved or painted on the gates of the forts like Uraiyur.[1073] The poet Kapilar's pen-por-trait depicts Gajalakshmi superbly.[1074] It is a representation of Tirumagal seated on a lotus and flanked by an elephant pouring water on either side. Such figures were on the thresholds of the houses.[1075]

The hymns in praise of Tirumal were the Devapani.[1076] The Paripadal songs are ecstatic outpourings set to music, some of which by their authors themselves. "The verses of the Paripadal might have been widely sung like the Tevaram, Tiruvachagam and other hymns."[1077] Setting tunes is the common factor between the Paripadal songs and the devotional hymns of the Alwars and Nayanmars of the post Sangam period. Therefore, the poets of the Paripadal appear to be the pioneers in the field of devotional lyrics in Tamil literature. Further, singing the praises of the Lord accompanied the performance of the Kuravai dance.

1070 Nilakanta Sastri K.A., A Note on Sculpture during the Sangam Age, pp. 88-90 (in The Sangam Age, Bharati Tamil Sangam, Calcutta).

1071 Silappadikaram, XII : 33.

1072 Paripadal, 19 : 45-53.

1073 Maduraikkanchi, 593; Pattinappalai, 40-41; 291.

1074 Kurinjikkali, 8 : 1-7.

1075 Nedunalvadai, 81-83.

1076 Silappadikaram, VI : 35.

1077 Vaithilingam S., Fine Arts and Crafts in Pattupattu and Ettuttogai, p.87.

Traditional association of flute with Krishna and lute with Kaman deserves attention.

Dancing was not just a pastime for the ancient Tamils. Occasions like the marriages, festivals and triumphs in wars provided opportunity to dance. The sublimation of this art is visible in its elevation to the religious plane. "Kuruvaikkuttu is an art of divine significance. Here may be seen the future development of Krishna's Rasalila."[1078] That the Kuravaikkuttu was performed by Krishna along with Balarama and Nappinnai has been noticed earlier. At the mundane level Aichchiyar Kuravai was done to please the Lord for averting foreseeable dangers in life. Kuravai dance, though considered appropriate to the Mullai region, was performed in the other regions also. The Kudakkuttu, Mallinadal and Alliyam played by the Lord and the Pediyadal by Kaman were noticed already. To nonplus and force the war-like demons retreat, Tirumagal did the Pavaikkuttu in the guise of Mohini.[1079]

Selvakkadungo Vali Adan worshipped Mayavannan (Krishna) and donated to Mayon (Tirumal) a village famously known for the raising of a special variety of paddy called Ottiram.[1080] A solitary instance of religious disputation based on differences in the creeds is noticed in the account of Avur Mulankilar (St. 166 in the Purananuru) about the learned and philanthropic Vinnan Tayan's conquest of 'false religions.' The Manimekalai also relates the points of view of the various religions. At an intellectual level these might have enabled clarification of different creeds. But such things are notable by their absence at the political and popular levels. The Sangam Age as a whole displays religious harmony and tolerance. Persecution and fanaticism are conspicuously absent. Senguttuvan, a devotee of Siva, accepted the remnants of the offerings to Tirumal at Adagamadam. The authors of the Aichchiyar Kuravai in the Silappadikaram and the invocation to the Narrinai had praised other gods as well. "The kind of strife

[1078] Vaithilingam S., Ibid, p.242, E.S. Varadaraja Aiyar E.S., op.cit., p. 242.

[1079] Silappadikaram, VI : 60-61.

[1080] Padittruppattu, VII Ten, Padigam.

mentioned by Mehendra Varman in his Mattavilasa Prahasanam seems to have been happily absent."[1081]

Buddhism in Sangam Age

The Nanda and Maurya Periods

While Inscriptions in Karnataka (10th and 11th centuries A. D.) preserve faint memories of the rule of the Nandas in Western Deccan and Karnataka, Sangam literature contains references to the Nandas and the Mauryas. The Tamil texts indicate that atleast on one occasion, the Mauryas helped the Kosar to subdue the rebellious, chieftains of Mokur.[1082] The rnauryan invasion was by Bindusara (288. B. C.) and the vadugar and the Kosar helped him. Asoka inherited an extensive and highly organised empire and proved fully worthy of his heritage. He worked ardently for the happiness and welfare of his subjects. A follower of the Vedic religion until the conquest of Kalinga (261 B.C.) when he embraced Buddhism, he visited the Sangha and all holy spots connected with Buddha and Buddhism. When he pressed into service, the vast material, esouices of his empire into the service of Buddhism, the stupas and vikaras, the symbols of the faith already in practice, increased enormously in numbers; and his example was followed by others. The greatest innovation Asoka made in Buddhism was to rescue the ideal of Dharma from negligent position, give it primacy and make it the touch stone of the whole of his life's work.[1083] This idea! was more ethical and social than religious and includes even the animal kingdom.

Asoka adopted the practice of proclaiming by edicts which he called Dharmalipis, for the propagation of Dharma. The fourteen rock edicts, the two Kaiinga edicts and the seven pillar edicts describe the different aspects of Dharma. Morality, Religious

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[1081] Subramanian N., Sangam Polity, op.cit., p. 382.

[1082] Nilakanta Sastri K.A.(ed); Age of Nandas and Mauryas, Delhi 1967, p. 255.

[1083] Hanumanta Rao B.S.L., Indian History and Culture, Volume I; p. 117.

toleration and harmony, kindness towards animal life, etc., were the essentials of Dharma. Devanampriya priyadarsaa provided for the medical treatment and gardens of medicinal herbs for the benefit of man and beast. Himself an adherent of the doctrine of Ahimsa, Asoka prepared an eloborate code of regulation and restriction of harm to animals and birds and it applied to the whole of his empire. He implemented exhortations by his untiring personal example besides his powerful administrative machinery, particularly the officers Rajjukas and Mahamatras. Dhamma Mahamatras were newly created by Asoka, thirteen years after his coronation, to establish and promote Dhamma among all the sects in the land and the happiness of people devoted to Dhamma.[1084] There were the Stri. Adhyaksha Mahamatras whose name indicates their controj over women. With deserving satisfaction. Asoka, whose reign constitutes one of these "rare and lightenipg epochs" in the annals of nations whea a people experienced a glimpse of happiness, records that his example has borne fruit in his lifetime.[1085]

Deccan and South India

The find spots of Asokas' inscriptions and their contents attest not merely the extent of his empire but the expansion of his religious policy and Dharma. For example, the Dhauli (Puri District) and Jaugada (Ganjam District) sets of the XIV Rock Edicts, the copies of Minor Rock Edicts at Maski (Raichu District), Jannagiri, Yerragudi, Rajulamandagiri (Kurnool District), Bhattipro (Guntur District), Jatingarameswara and Bretmagiri (Chitaldurg District) may be cited, of the tribes living in his empire, the Rashtrikas, Bhojas, Pitinikas, Andhras and Parind[1086] were in the regions of Maharashtra, Konkan Berar, the Godavari and Krishna and part of eastern Deccan respectively. Of the tribes outside the Empire,were the Cholas, the pandyas, the Satyaputras and

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[1084] Rock Edict V: Pillar Edict VII.

[1085] Nilakanta Sastri K.A. (ed), Age of Nandas and Mauryas, Op.cit., pp. 241, 229.

[1086] Rock Edicts, V and XIII.

Keralaputras[1087] living in the regions of Tanjore and Tiruchirapalii, Madura, Ramanath-puram and Tirunelveli and Kerala respectively.

Asoka sent Buddhist missionaries for the propagation of Buddhism in Deccan and South India. They were Mahadeva to Eastern Deccan, Ywia Dliainmarakshita to Aparantaka (northern half of Bombay coast) Mahadhammarakshita to Maharashtra and Mahendra to Sri Lanka.[1088]

Mahadeva settled at Dhanyakataka a Buddhist centre by this time and established the Chaityavada tradition. The followers of this tradition were called Chaityakas. Buddhism, thus already under the patronage of the Nagas became widespread under Asoka's religious policy in Andhradesa; so also Asoka's Dharma as the edicts at Suvarnagiri (Jonnagiri),[1089] Yerragudi[1090] and Rajulamandagiri[1091] and Bhaitiprohfi[1092] Amaravati[1093] show. The Buddhism that spread in Andhradesa when Asoka was related to Mahasangh ikavada.

There are no Edicts of Asoka found in Tamilakam so far and the influence of Buddhism and Dharma in the region is not clear. No doubt Dhannamahamatras and Buddhist missionaries had the patronage of the Cholas, the Cheras and the Pandyas of the Sangam Age under the Satavahanas.

The Satavahana period was the Golden Age for Buddhism as the Sangam Age for Tamil literature. When the Satavahanas came to power, there was a movement for the revival for Brah-manism. King Satakarni I championed the Vedic religion. But the

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1087 Rock Edicts, II and XIII.

1088 Dipavamsa, VIII; Mahavamsa, XII

1089 Krishnamachrlu C.R., Proceedings of Indian History Congress, (1944); p. 146

1090 Mukherji R.K., Asoka, pp. 260 – 261.

1091 Epigraphia Indica; Volume XXI; p. 211.

1092 Sircar D.C., Select Inscription 1 : pp 212 – 215.

1093 Epigraphia Indica; Volume XXXV p. 40 ft.

prevalence of Bhakti cults is implied in the legends of Krishna, Radha and the Gopikas and temples of Gaud and Ganapati and references to the Kapalikas in the Gathasaptasati.

Like Asoka, and the rulers of the Tamilakam, the Satavahanas were wellknown for their spirit of tolerence. Hinduism and Buddhism and Jainism flourished free from religious animosities and conflicts. They made several grants to Buddhism. Buddhism was in this period more popular with royal women, and the masses. Most of the Satavahana queens[1094] were Buddhists and Buddhist institutions received their permanent patronage. While several of Satavahana coins[1095] depict the Buddhist symbols of elephant, horse, bull, lion, chaityaviksha, Triratna and so forth, an inscription at Kanheri of the reign of Gautamiputra Yajnasri Satakarni shows that the two brotherd Gajasena and Gajabhadra excavated and donated a cave to Bhadayaniya Buddhasanga.

Buddhist Sects

To compose the differences consequent on several schisms in Buddhist sangha. several Sangitis or Councils were held from time to time. Inscriptions show that numerous sects flourished in the Deccan in this period. Accordingly, the Bhadrayaniyas, Dharmottariyas, Mahasanghikas and Chaityakiyas were numerous in Western Deccan where as the Rajagirikas, Puravasailiyas, Aparamahavirasailyds, Chaityakiyas and siddhartikas were popular in the Eastern Deccan.[1096] While the Mahachaitya at Amaravati was in the possession of the Chaityakiyas, the Mahachaitya of Nagarjunakonda was under the control of Aparamahavirasailiyas.

The extensive building activity of the Buddhist monuments for example, Pitholcora caves (B.C. 3rd century, Ajanta (B.C. 2nd century), Karle, Kuda, Junar, Kankeri

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[1094] Gautami Balasri-Nasik Inscription Epigraphia Indica; Volume, VIII; pp 60 – 65; 70 - 73

[1095] Sastri B.N., Andhrula Sanghikacharitra, Madras, 1975, p. 32

[1096] Memories of Archeological Survey of India, No. 75 pp. 35- 36. Ramachandran T.N., lists 32 Schools of Buddhism under the heads-Orthodox Eleven: Unorthodox Seven and Others Fourteen

and Nasik caves (B.C. 1st century). Bhaja and Bedsa in the Western Deccan Amaravati, Bhattiprolu and Nagarjunakonda in the Eastern Deccan attest that the Chaityaka cult was predominant in Deccan. Its main features were the worship of the Bodhi tree Dhannachakra and the foot prints of Buddha.This culminated in Mahayanism.[1097]

Madhyamika vada was the result of a revolutionary change n the Buddhist doctrines and their implementation. This was evolved by Acharya Nagarjuna. According to the implementation of this doctrine, the worship of the image of Buddha started, while the worship of Buddha symbols continued also. Thus Buddha worship continued also, and was very popular. The image of Buddha was in the standing form with the right hand in the Abhaya pose as at Amaravati and in the posture of sitting as in Dhyanamudra or in the Dharmachakra pravarlhana form. Buddha padas adorned with numerous auspicious symbols, the empty throne, the Bodhi tree, the Svastika, the Triratna, the Dharma Chakra and the flaming pillar were ardently worshipped.[1098]

Like Asoka, the Satavahanas issued their inscriptions in Prakrit language as the people in the empire were conversant with Prakrit besides the regional language. Under royal patronage, Nagarjunacharya propagated Buddhist tenets and art into South East Asia. This great scholar, scientist and religious missionary spent major portion of his career in the Buddhist centres at Vijayapuri and Dhanyakataka. Where ever he resided, there he established libraries, educational and cultural centres for the benefit of the commoD man. Nagarjuna's birth place was either Vidarbha or Kanchipura, according to different scholars. But he lived in the Sankarma at Sriparvata built by the Satavahanas.[1099] According to Lankavatara Sutra Buddha prophesied that six hundred years after him a bikshu by name Naga would be born and another

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1097 Rama Rao M., Buddhism in Andhra, pp. 11 - 20

1098 Epigraphia Indica; Volume XX; Nagarjuna konds Inscription

1099 Nalinaka Dutt; Aspects of Mahayana Buddshim: p. 43.

legend has it that this Naga did penance under Arjuna tree and attained Siddhi. So he came to be known as Nagarjuna. There are several legends, some saying that he as mendicant embraced Hinayana and later Mahayana Buddhism, worshipped Taradevi at Kanchi, and Chandika at Nalanda, learnt Tantra Sastra, and received Tattvopadesa from Mahanaga, proceeded to Ceylon and secured the works Prajnaparamatasutra, vaipulya sutra, and Karandika containing relics of Buddha.[1100]

An expert in Rasayana Sastra, Nagarjuna wrote Rasara-Inakara, Koshputa and Arogyamanjari. He revised Susruta's work on medicine. Along with Buddhist doctrines, he inscribed on stones and pillars, the treatment for various diseases.[1101] He attached importance to Sunyavada and prepared the basis for Mayavada of Sri Sankara Acharya. Of the several works of Nagarjuna, only twenty-four have survived and these have been translated into Tibetan and Chinese languages. His letter to the Satavahnu; king is called Suhrullekha[1102] that is, letter to a friend, was committed to memory by his children.[1103] As he refers to Asvaghosha, ths court poet of Kanishka, in his works he belonged to the 2nd century (A. D. 137-194). Aryadeva[1104] was a disciple of Nagarjuna.

Art and Architecture

Satavahana art is closely related to Buddhism. The monuments and sculpture on them were utilised for the propagation of Buddhism. In depicting the life story of Buddha, the important stages in his life and the Jataka stories dealing with the lives of

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1100 Sastri B. N., Andhrula Sanghikacharitra (1975) pp. 68 – 72.

1101 Kimura Mahayana R. Hinayana works known to Nagarjuna. Indian Historical Quarters. Volume III; pp. 412 – 417.

1102 Krishna Rao G.V., Vigrahavyavartani; Intro

1103 Itsing The Chinese Traveller (A.D. 700) K.A. Nilakanta Sastri; Foreign Notices of South India Madras, 1960, p. 97.

1104 Sastri P.S. Some Buddhist Thinkers of Andhra Indian Historical Quarterly, Volume XXXII: p. 163 ft.

the previous Buddhas, master architect and craftsman and sculptor excelled in his profession, for example, the stupas and the Mahachaityas.

The Satavahana art expressed itself in three forms, (a) excavation of caves (b; building of brick monuments and fc) construction of gate ways.[1105] The caves were of three typesi ihe Chaityas the Viharas and assembly halls. The Chanyas were not only in the form of rock cut caves but also built of bricks. Some chaityas are located on hills and some of them in the plains, The Chaityas were meant for worship by the Buddhists. Around the Chaityas are built stupas. The Stupas were of three types:(a) containing body relics as tooth, nails, hair, limbs, ashes etc., (b) those built on articles used and Lked by individuals, and these commemorative, raised in memory of individuals.

Of the rock cut caves in the Eastern Deccan, the biggest is the monolothic stupa on the top of Bojjannakonda. It has a diameter of 64' and 8". There are several smaller stupas of this model.[1106] Amaravati Mahachaitya was the largest of the variety built with bricks. It had a height of 100' and diameter of D8[1107] The stupa at Bhattiprolu was smaller than the one at Amaravathi[1108]. The Chaitya at Ramathirtham[1109] had an area of 60'X 13'. Some of the Buddhist tirthas or settlements built on hills were in Salihundum, Ramatirtham, Simhachalam and Guntu-palli, while the majority of them built in plains were located in Dharapatem, Adurru, Kattipudi, Anigolanun,Timmavaram, Vengi, Alluru, Gunvnadidurru, Garikapadu, Kodavali, Pithapur, Jaggaya peta, Nandigama, Gudivada, Sankaram, Ghantasala, Vidyadhara-puram,Amaravathi, Bhattiprolu, Nagarjunakonda, Goli, Ch.inagan-jam, Peddaganjam, Buddham, Muktyala, Madugula,

1105 Sastri B.N., Andhrula Sanghika Cahritra Madras, 1975, p. 91- 92.

1106 Rea A. Report of Archelogical Survey of India, 1907-8 Note on p. 158; pp 161 - 162

1107 Hanumantha Rao B.S.L., Religioin in Andhra, Madras 1973, p. 58.

1108 Rea A., South Indian Buddhist Antiquities, pp. 7 – 17.

1109 Rea A., Annual Report of Archelogical Survey of India; 1910 – 11 p. 75

Panigiri, Velpuru, Attaluru, Motupal'i, Kanuparti, Pedamadduru, Chejerla, Chebrolu, Manchikallu, Samadhanapwam, Rentala, Gajulabanda and Kondapuram, etc.

The Vihara was a habitation of the Buddhist monks. Viharas were cut out of rocks in the Western Deccan and brick built in the Eastern Deccan. The Viharas had small rooms with small stone platforms and water tubs, baths, drainage : they were endowed with schools. A Buddhist monastery with a school or college was known as Sangharma or Mahasangharma. These monuments were built of brick. The Buddhist monks and nuns used to assemble frequently in the assembly halls in the viharas for the preaching and discourse on Dharma of Buddha. Thus they propagated Buddhism. Devout worshippers of Buddha attended these assemblies. As for gateways, the gate ways of Sanchi Stupa are adorned with marvellous sculptures which earned world celebrity.

Amaravati

The Stupa at Amaravati was built by a Naga King prior to Asoka's reign It contained a Buddha relic[1110] and was improved in the reign of Asoka. The Stupa was further embellished during the regime of the Satavahanas and acquired such wonderful beauty that it occupied superb position not merely in the history of Buddhism in South India but in the history of entire Buddhism itself. The mahaprakara around the Mahachaityagriha enshrining the stupa was raised by Acharya Nagarjuna, this brims with wonderful sculptures. The Amaravati art exemplifies the high sentiments of compassion, jubilation, sorrow and truthful happiness. Outer side of the prakara teems with sculptures of animals; the pillars of the Chaitya and the Stupa bear the figures of the Bodhi tree, Dharmachakra, Yakshas, full lotus and half lotus, and Triratnas. The mahabhinishkramana of Buddha, demonstrative exposition of archery, the story of Angulimala. etc. are sculptured in some parts.

[1110] Burgess J., The Buddhist Stupas of Amaravati and Jeggayyapeta.

The Mahachatya was at the acme of its glory in the 2nd century A. D. The nigh level and low level in the sculptures are indicated by long distances and closeness respectively. Not merely that one sculpture is better than another, but every one of them has its own individual merit. The sculptures of men and women are fine and attractive. Of the hundreds of lotuses depicted, no two looses are alike but each had its own differences. The Jataka stories and events of Buddha's life are beautifully sculptured. The figures of dwarfs snow the sentiment of hasya.

Nagarjunakonda

The Sangharama called Paravata Vihara built by a Satavahana king had five storeys. The ground floor comprised five hundred rooms and was in the shape of an elephant, the second storey with four hundred rooms was in lion shape; the third storey, with three hundred rooms was in the form of a horse ; the fourth storey with two hundred rooms was in the form of a buil; and the top storey with a hundred rooms had the shape of a pigeon. On its top was located a water tank. Fahien called it Poloyu. Hieun Tsang mentioned the building as Polomolakili.[1111]

In this five storeyed building were viharas and assembly halls- Each vihara had a golden image of Buddha. In the top storey were preserved the Buddhist religious works. The ground floor was for food, utensils etc. Chinese pilgrims called it Paravatavihara, Paravata Sangharama meaning Sriparvata or Nagarjunakonda.

Salihundam

At Salihundam,[1112] the Prakara of the Chaitya had gate ways on four sides. On the platform facing each gate were five kalyana mantapas. On the top of the pillars of these mantapas were images of the Yakshas. The depicting of pancha kalyanas on

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[1111] Nilakanta Sastri K.A., Foreign Notices of South India.

[1112] Subrahmanyan R., Salihundam, A Buddhist site inn Andhra Pradesh (1964) Journal of Andhra

Ayaka pillars was a regular feature of the Buddha sculpture, in this period. The five great events concerning the life of Buddha namely a) the birth b) Mahabhinishkramana c) Buddha's preaching d) the first sermon of Buddha in Mrigavanam and e) Mahaparinirrana were the panchakalyanas. Terracotta images at Gajulabanda and Kondapuram show excellent workmanship.

Ajanta and Ellora

In Western Deccan, the Ajanta and Ellora, caves acquired world fame. At Ajanta, caves bearing numbers 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13 belonged to the Satavahana age. Figures in them, natural scenery, on the roofs, sculptures depicting Jataka stories and incidents from.Buddha"s life are beautiful and attractive.

The Ellora Caves, the abodes of superb sculptural exuberance have Buddha images upto the height of 12. There is some speciality in these idols of Buddha; each one distinguishes itself from another by some difference in details. The walls and doors of these caves bear the sculptures of Mithuna pairs in various dance postures.

Besides Ajanta and Ellora which atleast to the creative genius and marvellous workmanship of the sculptor, the other important Buddhist caves in Western Deccan were Mahar, Kol-sirval, Vay, Karad, Kondane, Bhoja, Bhedra, Pithalkora, Sailarvadi Junnar, Tulaja, Ganesalena, caves in Sulaiman hills,

Kondyeke, Nanaghat, Nasik, Kanheri, Karla etc., These were homes of Buddhist art and sculpture.

Under the fkshvakus

Of the Ikshvakus of Vijayapuri, the political successors of the Satavahanas in the Eastern Deccan, the first ruler Vasisbta-putra Santamula I was a zealous devotee of Vedic religion and revived it by performance of sacrifices, i. e. Asvamedha and

popularised the cult of Mahasena, that is, Kumarasvami[1113] But Mathariputra Virapurushadatta I, the son and successor turned an ardent champion of Buddhism and propagated it. He enriched considerably the Buddhist Tirtham at the Nagarjuna Konda valley. The renovation of the Mahachaitya was made in the 6th regnat year of Vira Purushadatta, under the supervision of a monk Bhadanta Ananda. Several Ayaka pillars in the Mahachaitya were raised by several queens and princesses. A Chaitussala was built in the 10th year of the reign at the foot of the Mahachaitya. A Chaitagriha on the Kshudra Dharmagiri on Sri Parvata was constructed by Bodhisri, for the use of the monks hailing from Tambraparani. Kulahavihara, Simhala Vihara and another Vihara in the 14th year of the king were built by her. She built a room on Mahadharmagiri and a man-tapam in Mahavihara. A Chayakamha in memory of Santamula was set up by several lady members of the royal family in the 20th year of Virapurusha Datta.[1114]

The renunciation of Vaidika dharma and embracing of Buddhism, a most important incident of the reign on Virapurushadatta is illustrated by three sculptures obtained during the course of the Nagarjunakonda valley excavations.[1115] a) one of them depicts a king, obviously Srivirapurushadatta, trampling upon a Linga protected by a Cobra hood, b) another sculpture illustrates the same event c) this sculpture depicts two incidents in two parts. 1) in the left half, the kingwith his hands on waist bends and tramples with his right foot Siva Linga in the womb of the Naga: behind the king are two ladies standing and doing anjali; in the upper part of the sculpture are shown the horse, the elephant, throne with Dharraachakra, 2) the right half of the sculpture depicts a Bodhisatva ascending the throne, the King standing in his presence utters some words and than sits at his feet. Thus the King renouncing Saivism

1113 Epigraphia Indica Volume XX Nagarjuna Konda Inscriptions

1114 Ibid

1115 Rama Rao M., Ikshvakus of Vijayapurai; pp. 33 – 35 M. Rama Rao: Studies in the Early History of Andhra pp. 67 – 68 B.V. Krishna Rao: Early Dynasties of Andhra ; pp. 57 ft.

takes shelter in Buddhism.[1116] Consequent on his change of religion, in the 18th year of his reign, Virapurushadatta had to confront a serious rebellion of the people. Four records of Santi sri, his mother-in-law unusually pray for his victory and longevity. A sculpture depicts a grim fight involving a king is an illustration of their fight. On the left side a warrior on an elephant is shown falling down. On the side of it a horseman with several warriors bearing shields; by the side of the horseman a warrior is thrusting a sword into the body of a warrior is prostrating. On the right side of the sculpture are many warriors bearing maces fighting. There are common soldiers having no mounts such as elephants or horses. In this sculpture, the person on the elephant is Virapurusbadatta and people shown were rebels. But subsequently the king suppressed the rebellion.[1117]

In the reign of Sri Santamula II the successor Srivirapurusha-datta, Buddhism was patronised and Buddhist institutions received large benefactions. Mahadevi Bhatti deva rani, a queen of Virapurusha datta donated the Devivihara to Buddhists of the Bahusrutiya sect in the 2nd year of the region. In the 11th year of the reign Mahadevi Kodabalisri, a sister of the king built a vihara for the monks of the Mahisasaka sect.[1118]

Under Ikshvaku regime, Nagarjuna konda valley remains a celebrated Buddhist Tirtha attracting many numbers" of visitors from distant countries like China and Ceylon. The valley teemed with Stupas, Chaiyagnihas and monesteries and some of the Stupas had fine sculptures in the later Amaravati style. Among the several lady members of the royal family who liberally patronised Buddhism and constructed many fine buildings, Adavi Santisri, Santasiri, Bapisirinika, Chulasatisiri and

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1116 While R.S. Panchamukhi explains that the sculptures represent the demolition and destruction, A malice Avarice, Buddhist Art in Andhradesa – Bharatiya Vidya Volumes XX and XXI p. 319 B.S.L. Hanumanta Rao says that the sculptures are a part of Mandhata Jataka and represent Mandhatal conquest of Nagaloka – Religion in Andhra p. 63

1117 Epigraphia Indica Volume XX; Nagarjunakonda Inscriptions

1118 Sastri B.N., Andhrula Sanghikacharitra. pp. 115–119.

Rudradharabhatarika, each raised a Ayaka piliar at the Mahachaitya durings its renovation in the 6th year of Sri Virapurushadatta. Santi Siri the mother-in-law of Virapurusha-datta built a stone shrine at the foot of the Mahachaitya in the 18th years of the King. On the 8th year of- the reign of Santamula II, a stone mantapa on Sriparvata was constructed by two individuals. There were several other Buddhist estblish-ments set up many devotees in Nagarjuna Konda valley.[1119]

Buddhist Sects

Among the Buddhist sects which flourished in the Ikshvaku period were Aparamahavira Sailiyas, Bahusutiyas and the Mahishasakas. Nagarjuna Konda was a great centre of Mahayana . Buddhism.[1120] The Buddhist sects here belonged to Mahasanghi kavada. For his great services to Buddhism, Virapurushadatta was called the'Southern counterpart of the great emperor Asoka' by some scholars.

Art and Sculpture

The stupas at Nagarjunakonda, Jaggayya peta and Ramireddipaili were built, renovated and redidcated during the Ikshvaku period. This period witnessed even great missionary activity. Buddhist monks from Nagarjunakouda went to Kashmir Gandhara, China, Aparanta, Vanga and Simhala. The Simhala Vihara at Nagarjunakonda was set apart for the Ceylonese monks. Monks from Tosaii, yavana, Dhemila, Vanavasi, Palura, etc. visited Nagarjunakonda.[1121]

Dhanya Kutaka was celebrated as a Buddhist centre for education in this period. Thousands of students were studying here staying in the Sangharama. 'Dapung' Sangharama in tibet was modelled after the Sangharama in Dhanyakataka. Dapang means Dhaayarasi obviously it was named after Dhanyakataka. There were 7,70J monks

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1119 Rama Rao M., The Ikshvakus of Vijayapurai, p.73.

1120 Sastri A. M., An outline of Early Buddhism, p. 93.

1121 Epigraphia Indica; Volume XX – Nagarjunakonda Inscriptions.

in Dapang. In that area was university with six colleges, under its control Manuscripts dealing with the Sangharama at Dhanyakataka were preserved in the libraries located in the viharas at Nalanda and Vikramasila.[1122]

Vengi, also was a great educational centre, in this period. Stupas with a height of 100' were in the front of the Sangharama here. There were several palaces with storeys and exquisitely carved pillars.[1123] Sangharamas served also as hospitals for treatment of men and animals.

(c) Donations

The main motive of gifts to Buddhist tirthas was the welfare of animate beings, a) Welfare of the world b) of all living beings c) Salvation d) bliss in the two worlds e) happiness of the Sangha in trikalas (Past, present and future)[1124] As Gautama Buddha himself, the Ikshvakus belonged to the same lineage, the inscriptions of the Ikshvakus at Nagarjuoakonda adore Buddha as God and shower praise on him excessively. The Buddhist sacred books, namely Dighanikaya Majhimanikaya and Pencha-matrika are praised in our lkshvaku inscription of Nagar junakonda. Buddhist Educational centres in the Sangharamas provided facilities for education for the masses.

Tamilakam

In Tamilakam, Kankaia of the Cholas, Netunchelian I and II of the Pandyas and Senguttuvan of the Cheras distinguished themselves in the Sangarn age. On the whole, the rulers of the Sangam age were celebrated for their spirit of religious toleration.[1125] For, tribal religions, Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism prevailed without any discard. The monarchy of the age publicly encouraged the spirit of free enquiry, or the liberty of

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[1122] Sastri B.N., Andhrula Sanghika Charitra, p. 125.

[1123] Sastri B.N., Andhrula Sanghika Charithra, p. 126.

[1124] Epigraphia Indica; Volume XX, Nagarjunakonda Inscriptions.

[1125] Kanakasabhai V., op. cit; p. 232.

the human understanding. The invited religious discourses by requesting teachers of every sect to the public halls, and allowing them to preach their doctrines during festivals and similar occasions of public gathering. They gave protection impartially to the temples and monastaries of all sects Though they might have personally had belief in a particular sect and its doctrines and extended special patronage to that sect by building and endowing places of worship, they did not interfere with the rites and ceremonies of rival faiths. The religious liberty had a great and salutary influence upon the intellectual and moral development of the Tamils. When actually Buddhism made its entry into Tamilakam is not definitely known. But this phenomenon undoubtedly happened in the reign of Asoka the Great, if not earlier for the II and XII Rock Edicts mention the Chola, Pandya and Kerala putra Kingdoms and the Tamraparani. Though these were outside his Empire, Asoka was so friendly with them that he could arrange for the medical treatment of men and animals in these kingdoms and also for the importation and planting of useful medicinal herbs and roots whenever they were needed. Asoka sent his missionaries to preach Dharma among the people of these kingdoms.[1126]

Buddhist sects

Buddhism of Hinayana form prevailed in Tamiiakam. The work Manimekalai or Manimekalai Thuravu as the author designated it, an epic poem is an invaluable source for gauging the extent to which Buddism spread in South India, Tamiiakam and Ceylon and Sumatra (early in the 2nd Century A. D.) With the exception of the Buddhist sacred texts, Manimekalai is the earliest record, extant in any language, giving information about Buddhism, the objects of worship, the peculiar beliefs and and superstitions of the Buddhists and the abstruse philosophy of the followers of Buddha.[1127] According to

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[1126] Nilakanta Sastri K.A. (Ed); Age of the Nandas and the Mauryas p. 250

[1127] Nagaswamy R. (ed): South Indian Studies, (II (1979) Dr. C. Minakshi Buddhism in South India, p. 88

the poem, the Buddhist monks were numerous in Tamilakam; and some of them claimed marvellous powers as the ability to know the past and forecast the future. They believed in charms and incantations, and the existence of spirits which had communion with human beings. The author of the work Citalaiccattanar seems to have been a zealous- and learned Buddhist following the current traditions regarding the aerial travels of Buddha and his knowledge of previous birth. The story describes the circumstance under which Manimekalai, the daughter of Kovalan renounced the world and turned a Buddhist nun.[1128]

Art

Unlike, in Tamilakam, Mahayana form of Buddhist had not developed in this period. For the images of Buddha had not yet come into use. So the impressions of Buddha's feet engraved on stone and platforms built of stone representing the seat from which Buddha preached his gospel constituted the objects of worship for Buddhists. The devout Buddhist walked round them with his right side towards them and bowed his head in reverance. Standing in front of them with folded hands he praised, the Buddha thus: "How shall I praise theem the wise, the holy and virtuous teacher, who excelled in the strict performance of the religious vows: Thou, who conquered Maya, who subdued anger and all evil passions: who art supreme in Knowledge, and the refuge of all manking! Have I a thousand tongues to praise thy blessed feet, on the sole of which are a thousand auspicious lives.[1129] The Chaityagirhas at Vanji, the capital of the Cheras, and. at Kanchi, the capital of the Cholas and Seven viharas at Kaveripoompattinam find mention in Sangam literature. In the Buddhist Viharas, learned monks preached their sermons seated in a place which was completely closed from the view of the audience. Charity was a great virtue preached and practised

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1128 Kanakasabhai V., The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago, The Chapter on Manimegalai.

1129 Kanagasabhai V., op. cit; XV.

by the monks. "Those who give food give life indeed" was a common saying among Buddhists. Self control, wisdom and universal charity were considered to give man sublime happiness. There were a thousand monks in the seven viharas in Kavitippumpattinam. The Buddhists did not observe caste and united people of all ranks to assemble on a basis of equality. By the softening feelings and manners, Buddhists to a large extent influenced the different strata of society. They contributed to the amelioration of the social ills.[1130] The Buddhists schools prevalent in the Tamilakam were the Yoga, Dhyana, Sthavira and Theravada[1131] while the Mahayana and its several sects had taken deep roots in Deccan, particularly Eastern Deccan during the Sangam age. The impact of Buddhism in Deccan was profound in this age though shaken to its roots in the subsequent Ages. But the influence in Tamilakam was not so deep due to the conservation of the people but that was almost negatived by the Bhakti Movement in the pon Sangam Age, with mass appeal. In conclusion, it has to be needed whether in greater degree or lesser degree, Buddhism had its impact on South India - both Deccan and Tamilakam, during the Sangam Age.

Saivisam in the Sangam Literature

Siddhantam

Tamil Language is called “Divine Tamil” The ideals for which people lived and the ethics which the people followed formed the basis of their religion. The Sanskrit word ‘Siddhantam’ consists of two words, namely, ‘Siddham and 'Antam' which mean, 'ultimate end' or 'true end' or 'end of ends'. Even though there are Buddhist Siddhanta and Jaina Siddhanta, the word 'Siddhantam' when it stands alone refers only to the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy. Saivam means that which has connection with Siva. The word Saivam has its root in Sivam. Saiva Religion deals with Pad (God), Pasu (the souls)

1130 Ibid; Ch XV.

1131 Nagaswamy R. (ed:) op. cit., p. 90.

and Pasam (bondage) and Siva is its supreme God. The word Sivam stands for love, the good, the auspicious and the supreme Bliss. Tirumantiram of Tirumoolar is the first Tamil Agama. It is also a garland of manthras. He says clearly that God and Love are identical. The ignorant say that Love and Siva are two, But none do know that Love alone is Siva When men only know that Love and Siva are the same. Love as Siva they ever remained.[1132] The world is a combination of Earth, Fire, Water, Air and Ether. These are called the five Butas. Tolkappiam says, the World is a combination of Earth, Fire, Water Air and Akas.[1133] Purananuru and Maduraikkanchi the two Sangam works also refer to the fact that the world is constituted of the five[1134] elements.[1135] Maduraikkanchi specifically refers to the fact that Lord Siva the wielder of the pick axe is the supreme Head of this world and is the Greater of the five Bhoothas. One of the instruments used for the original inhabitants of this world is pickaxe. This is also called Kunthali, Kodari, and Kanichi. These indicate that they belong to the pre-stone Age. This implies the fact that Siva was denoted as the greatest God who created the five elements and shows the greatness and antiquity of Lord Siva (In Saiva Siddhanta creation only means creation out of the primordial matter called Mayai). The ancient people worshipped Nature. This arose out of Love, fear, wonder, pleasure and gratitude. In due course they began to worshipped Sun, Fire, Moon Rain, etc. Tolkappiam expresses that the sun,moon and fire are akin to god.[1136] The Silappadikaram indicates the same idea in its invocation beginning with Saluations to Moon! Saluations to Sun! etc.[1137] There is no sprout without a seed. There is no effect without a cause. The phone 'A' is the cause for all letters in the alphabet. In the same way God is the first cause for

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1132 Tirumantiram, 257.

1133 Tol. Porul. 635.

1134 Puram. 2 : 1-6.

1135 Maduraik. 453 – 455.

1136 Tol. Porul. 85.

1137 Silambu, 1: 1, 4, 7.

the world. That is the reason way God is called Munaivan implying the first cause in Tolkappiam.[1138]

Tolkappiam also says that the consonants do not exist without the vowels in Tamil language. In the commentary on this Sutra by Naccinarkkiniyar. he refers to the saying of Lord Krishna that he is 'A' among the letters. It is therefore clear that God is the first cause of the world in the same way that 'A' is the first cause of the letters of the alphabet. From Tolkappiam we understand that God is above Karma and is the Light of knowledge and is a Protector of those who worship Him.[1139]

The antiquity of the practice of worshipping with flowers

The Tamils are lovers of flowers. In Sangam literature land is classified as Mullai, Kurinji, Marutam, Neital and Palai and each land has its own plants and flowers, conduct etc. Flowers represent the significant aspects of life in each region. Flowers are also divided into four categories namely Kottuppu (these which blossem in trees) Nilappu (those in earth), Nirppu (those in water) and Kotippu fthose in the creepers). Nakkirar in Kurinjippattu names 99 varieties of flowers and they were offered to Gods. Flowers are sanctified by offering them to God. Tirumoolar says, The Blessed have flowers and water With which to worship and God is pleased with them.[1140]

Do not reside in the village which has no temple.' It is extremely good 'to worship in temples' - those are old proverbs in Tamil which indicate that temple worship is a very ancient form of worship in Tamil Nadu. The words Il and Perumpadai occuring in Tolkappiam (Tol. Eluthathikaram 293, Porul. 63) indicate that they are the first steps to temple building. The term Koil in Tamil, originally meant the residence of the King. It subsequently, came to mean the residence of God. Alayam is another Tamil word which

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1138 Tol. Porul. 415.

1139 Tol. Porul. 640, 415.

1140 Tirumantiram. 1797.

implies not only the temple but also the place where the souls mingle. In ancient Tamilnadu it was the practice to erect a stone where a warrior was killed or burried. It was called Nadukal (Herostones). This has in due course developed in to temple[1141] There are temples on the hill tops. They are called Ampalam. Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer says in his commentary on Purananuru that people believed that the pillar in the Ampalams are the abodes of Gods.[1142] The Sangam Poems Paripadal and Tirumurugarruppadai give a vivid account about the temple worship. Madurai, Tirumaliruncolai, Tirupparankunram, Tiruchiralai-vai, Tiruvavinankudi, Tiruveragam, Palamutircolai are some of the places where one can find ancient temples and these have been referred to in Thirumumgurruppadai which is the only Sangam work which expresses the religious sentiments of the ancient Tamils. Attruppadai is a form of literature in which an artist who received gifts from a patron, guides another artist to the court of the patron. In Tirumurugarruppadai, the poet Nakkirar directs the people to the six shrines of Lord Muruga to receive his grace as a boon.

The antiquity of the Form of God

Siva worship first started into five worship then developed as Sound and subsequently as idol worship. In Tolkappiam[1143] in the sufra beginning with Theivam Unave Mamaram, the word Theivam indicates Light. In Tirumandiram the verse beginning with "Siva Siva Engilar Theevinaiyalar"[1144] (2716) the words 'Siva Siva' indicate sound. The excavations in Mohenjadora and Harappa reveal the idols of Lingam a::d NanJhi. T.i.sc excavations prove that the origin of Saivism goes back to a very earlier

1141 Tol. Porul. 63.

1142 Puram. 52:1; 12 – 13.

1143 Tol. Purul, 20.

1144 Tirumantiram, 2716.

period. Sir John Marshall[1145] says that Saivism is anterior to stone Age. Dr.G.U.Pope[1146] says that Saivism is the most ancient Religion of South India.

Deities

Sivan

The Sangam poet Madurai Kannattanar indicates that Sivan and Thirumal are the two great Gods of ancient times.[1147] It has to be noted that the word Sivan does not occur in the Sangam works. However Siva is referred as the God seated under the banyan tree.[1148] It has been said that Siva preached the message of the vedas to the people of the world.[1149] He is beleived to have created the Panchabutas. Maduraikkanci says that the Lord with axe is the Creater of water earth, fire, air and the Stars.[1150]

Siva is called by several names. He is called Mukkatselvar as He has three eyes.[1151] He is also called Kari Untikkadavul since He has devoured the poison which emerged from the ocean as a result of the churning of the ocean by the Devas and Asuras.[1152] He wields the Mazhu (Pickaxe). He wears Goddess Ganges crescent moon and Konrai garland[1153] He mounts on the full and the bull is also engraved in his flag.[1154] The Asuras who flew on three forts and gave untold misery to the Devas. A the request of the Devas.Siva destroyed these forts[1155]

1145 Sir John Marshall, Modenjadaro and the Indus Civilisation Vol. I. Preface p. vii

1146 Rev. Dr. G. U.Pope Translation of Tiruvachagam, p. 74.

1147 Akam, 360 :6.

1148 Tirumurug. 256; Kali. 81.

1149 Akam, 181.

1150 Maduraik, 443 – 545.

1151 Puram 6; Kali 2; Akam 81.

1152 Malaipadu, 83; Puram. 9; Pari. 8; etc.

1153 Akam. 220; Puram. 56; Kali 38

1154 Tirumurugu, 191 – 153; Parip 8; Puram Invoc V.

1155 Puram. 55: 1-5; Pari 5:25.

Ainkurunooru, Patirruppattu, Kalitthokai, Akananuru and Purananuru the five of the eight anthologies have invocation verses in praise of Lord Siva. Scholars attest a heavy antiquity to the worship of Siva in Tamilnadu[1156]

Murugan

Murugan is the Presiding deity of Kurinji land (Mountain regions).[1157] The worship of Murugan was accompanied with a dance called Veriyattu. Ainkurunuru has ten songs dealing with Veriyattu or frenzied dance. The girls after taking bath in a river clean the ground where the deities are supposed to stay, light perennial lamps and decorate it with flowers. Pattinappalai describes this ampalam or the open ground where the deity is invoked.[1158]

In the Sangam literature, Tirumurugarruppadai deals in great detail the worship of Lord Muruga. It describes Tirupparan-kuntram, Tirucciralaivai.. Tiruvavinankudi, Thiruvenagam, Pala-mutircolai, and Kunrutoradal the six Padaividus (the holy places) where Murugan resides. In Kuruntogai (one of the eight anthologies) the invocation song glorified Lord Muruga. Out of 22 verses in Paripadal, 8 gives a vivid account about the cult of Muruga.

In TamilNadu, the worship of Lord Muruga is very popular. Murugan destroyed Surapanma. Kottravai is the mother of Murugan and she is also considered as the child of six mothers.[1159]

Scholars who have made a comparative study of Tirumugarruppadai with other Sangam works think that the cult of Muruga depicted is in Tirumurugarruppadai,

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[1156] Sastri P.S. S., Sanga Nurkalum, Vaidiha Markamum, p. 53

[1157] Tol. porul. 5

[1158] Pattinap. 246 - 249

[1159] Thirumurugu. 46; Puram 23; 4, Kali, 93 : 26.

represents a period after the infiltration of Aryan Culture in Tamilnadu, when Subramniya and Karthikeya have been super imposed on Murugan.[1160]

Festivals

The national poet Subramaoya Bharathi's remark that chattering about the glories of our hoary past is of no practical use, is a highly commendable view. Nevertheless, the glorious past of the ancient Tamils is not to be altogether shunned away from our thoughts. In fact, from the historical point of view, the social history of the ancient Tamils is yet to be written, taking into account all the sources of history. The history so far written has taken into account mostly the literary sources and to some extent it has utilised the inscriptional evidences. A comprehensive study, making use of all the five major sources of history-literary, archaeological, inscriptional, numistatic and folklore tradition, a thorough reappraisal of the social history of the ancient Tamils, is a need long-felt and demanding immediate attention of the scholars concerned. Particularly, regarding the history of festivals celebrated by the ancient Tamils, the historians have expressed their regret over the lack of analytical as well as historical study about them,

Festivals : Definition

In the anthologies, the term festival (Vila) denotes' any act of rejoicing and uproar. Even marriage is referred to as Vatuvai Vila. It is used in a very general sense, to denote occasions of varying importance from ordinary religious rites such as Velan Veriyattu to grand social functions such as Venil Vila. To think of the current usage, even the anniversaries of greatmen are referred to as Vila. Similarly in ancient days, the laying of the hero stone. Nadukal was celebrated in a grand manner, an occasion noted for its fervour and festivity. In this context it is worth mentioning that the anniversary or centenary celebrations or the laying of Nadukal cannot be considered occasions of

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[1160] Vithiyananthan S., Tamilar Calpus, p. 137.

despair and desolaieness. They fit in as celebrations which are more in the nature of appreciating one's greatness and chivalry, deserving posterity's following them, than expressions of dismay. Considering all these factors, one may safely conclude that a festival, in a general sense, is an act of gathering of people with feelings of pleasure or pride.

Analysis of Ancient Tamilian Festivals

While analysing, mere listing of festivals will be of no help to any student of history to learn the culture of the people or the period under concern. Hence, an analysis that would throw light upon the society's attitudes and manners is to be attempted. One way of classification would be to differentiate them as individual ceremonies, family functions and social festivals. Another way would be to look, at them from the point of view of the underlying motivation ethical, economical or pleasure -based. These two 'Trivarga' classifications are likely to be overlapping. Hence, keeping in mind the fact that any classification cannot completely escape those two pitfalls overlapping and inexhaustiveness another mode of classification that would comparatively throw a brighter light upon the social activities of the ancient Tamils, is attempted in this paper :-Religious festivals, Seasonal festivals and chivalry festivals.

General References

It is significant that in the Sangam anthologies, non-specific, general references to festivals are many in number. They give us a view of the general nature of celebrations during the Sangam age. We understand that in general quite a number of festivals were celebrated. One may surmise a direct proportional relation between the antiquity of the place and the number of festivals celebrated there. Similar to today's custom, festivals were not celebrated during periods of mourning, such as the demise of a King. The commentators speak of a special drum used to announce the onset of a festival. Though

we have no direct literary evidence for such differentiation, yet it is possible that there were differences either in the making or in the beating of drums used for different purposes-to announce marriages, war and festival (The Mana Muracu, Por Muracu and Vila Muracn) as mentioned by the commentators. The village potter, decorating himself with Nocci flowers, will go round the village and announce the onset of festival.

The term Vilavayar Maruku suggests the system of having specific streets to celebrate the respective festivals. In this context, one can compare the view that the four streets around the Madurai temple extending in all the four directions, were named after the months during which the various festivals were celebrated, when the deity was taken in procession along those specific streets, adding the name of direction to it. Thus we come across an explanation for the naming of Adi, Cittirai, Avani and Maci Viti and the prefixes of directional names attached to them. The whole town or village was decorated. Fresh sand was spread and flowers were laid. People decorated their attires with flowers.

That the whole town joined in the rejoicing is mentioned in the literature, to which the commentators give the explanation that all the categories youngsters and old, rich and poor, men and women, people of the town and people from distant towns everyone rejoiced. This factor needs reconsideration and more of supporting evidences since it touches an important social attitude of the ancient Tamils. One evidence in support of this view is the reference in Purananuru which speaks of the cobbler hurrying over his needle in view of the oncoming festival and the advanced pregnancy of the lady at home. In general there was a lot of uproar. The sound of bells and musical instruments like Mulavu and Tannwnai were heard.

The practice of people from different places gathering together where a festival is celebrated as it is witnessed even today, for example, during the Cittirai festival at

Madurai -was in vogue, also during ancient days. A reference that says that people of different religions participated in the festival celebrations, needs consideration. This may denote either the non-religious aspect of the festivals or the religious tolerance among the people. Since we come across religious festivals such as Murukavel Vila and also religious rites introduced somewhere in the several stages of celebration of even the seasonal and festivals of chivalry, we may conclude that in general there was religious tolerance among the ancient Tamilians, or it may be that the people of a different religion took part only in the social aspects of the festivals and did not participate in the religious rites associated with them. For instance even today, Deepavali (a festival for Hindus as well as Jains, for whose origin both the mythologies have separate stories) is more or less a national festival in the sense that the rejoicing of lighting fire-crackers and the social aspects of making sweets and distributing them to the neighbours is common to all. Similar practice might have been observed during ancient days too. Auother aspect to be considered is that there were festivals such as Kartikai Vila which had less of religious rites and more of social aspects such as lighting and cooking special dishes. To conclude we may say that the nature of the festivals as well as the spirit of religious tolerance made it possible for the ancient Tamils to join in the celebration of festivals and rejoice, irrespective of their creed. In this context it is worth mentioning that excepting Intira Vila about which a ray of doubt lingers (as to whether it was a Hindu festival or a Buddhist festival; all the other festivals seem to have been Hindu festivals. This is significant because, we understand that Jainism and Buddhism were slowly spreading throughout Tamil Nadu during the Sangam Age.

In general, arts were patronised specially during festivals. General musical instruments are mentioned. A place called Vilavukkalam, and a stage referred to as Kuttattarankam are spoken of. The patini is portrayed as making non-expressive movements of hands and body. When the Virali danced, a person stood behind her and

drummed on Mattalam. Vayiriyar song and Kotiyar danced several pieces in orderly success on and left the stage. Balancing on rope by Kalaikkuttar was also performed.

Kuravaikkuttu and Tunankaikkuttu are the two that are mainly spoken of while referring to festivals. The Tunankaikkuttu is comparable to the ball room dance of the West. There, they are arranged and encouraged with a social purpose behind, i.e. to give an opportunity for the youngsters of the town to meet and get to know each other. After going through the minutes of the programme, the men decide the order of dances and the respective partners among the ladies gathered there. Then they get the consent of the ladies of their choice and start dancing. The person of first choice by an elegant and prospective bachelor is considered fortunate and enviable. The lady who is chosen as partner again and again by the same person is considered his favourite. In Tunankaikkuttu the lady who is chosen by the hero as his first partner an act referred to as offering Talaikkai meaning, giving his hand first is considered very important. In one of the akam verses, a lady is found challenging her rival and promising to prove to the world the person really favoured by the hero, on the day when Tunankaikkuttu is performed. Such similarities in culture are worthy of comparison.

Rich food, especially non-vegetarian had a prominant place in the ancient festivals. The consumption of food along with relatives and guests denote a ray of social consciousness in the celebration of festivals. Drinks were profusely taken in even to the extent of neglecting one's duty. Prostitutes seemed to have played a key-role in some of the festivals partly because of the pleasure-oriented nature of certain festivals like the Punal Vila and party because of their talent in Arts. Whatever might have been the festival, the above mentioned factors were present as the general elements in the festivals of ancient Tamilnad. Over and above, we come across also some specific and special features in the respective festivals.

Religious Festivals and Rituals

It is accepted by sociologists that religious rites which originated in the feelings of fear and desire in man, gradually emerged into festivals, and later on lost much of its original significance and turned into mere ceremonies. Hence, before with the religious festivals, the rituals performed are considered.

Worship

People of different regions worshipped the respective deities in different manners. The Kuravar of the hilly region are found offering Venkai flowers and honey to Lord Muruka, while dancing Kuravaikkuttu with their womenfolk, sounding the small drum made of deerskin. The people of the pastrol region are depicted as worshipping Turai, Alum and Tolvali Maram. The paratavar of the coastal region are seen planting the horn of shark fish decorating it with the Talai flowers, drinking palm toddy, dancing with women, playing in sea water, relishing over specially prepared delicacies and resting throughout the day and night on the day of full moon. They worshipped the sea deity. The people in the villages and towns lighted lamps and worshipped the deities offering paddy and flowers. The wayfarers - people living in the dry regions - worshipped the Goddess Korravai also referred to as Palaiyol.

Veriyattu

A specific ritual called velan veriyattu was performed when an adolescent girl was found waning in health. Similar to todays peyottal (driving away the haunting demon) chosen men or women were called to perform this. A separate place called Veriyayar Kalam is mentioned.

Worship of Muruka

Similar to today's Teivamerab- and And Varutal, we come across a rite called Murukarrupatuttal in ancient literature. Certain references denote that Veriyatal and this as one and the same. But the fact that Veriyatal had a purpose different from the latter, which was performed generally by the devotees of Lord Muruka, makes one differentiate between the two. In this context, the view of the sociologists that Sangam age was a transitional period and that the primitive religion was in vogue side by side with the gradually incoming alien practices, is worth remembering. It may be inferred

that Murukarrup-patuttal was the real, indigenous religious practice of the Tamils, wherein animal sacrifice was present

and the blood of sacrificial animal mixed with rice (either raw or cooked) was offered to the deity.

Rituals

Certain rites were performed for specific purposes. For instance, to invoke rain, to protect these who proved unfaithful, to get good match for girls, to have a normal child-birth, to have abundant breast-milk, to win the battle, etc. Regarding the rites for getting good spouses, it is only inferred from lines such as Taiyin niratiya tavam talaippatuvaiyo and the commentary given to them. Puberty rites, marriage rituals (which include the removal of anklets, a very controversial issue, as well as the bull-fight organised by the pastoral people) and the rituals followed while a soldier returned victorious from the battle field come under this. Apart from these rituals there were religious festivals celebrated in a grand scale.

Muruka Vila

A festival that is given no specific name but widely talked about in Paripadal is Lord Muruka's festival celebrated mainly in Tirupparankunram. Several incenses, lights that can withstand the gush of wind, flowers, musical instruments, bells, ropes, axe, peacock, and the elephant were got ready for a procession of the deity. People gathered there prayed to god and made several requests. Dances were perform id. Men and women bathed in the river. The uproar was echoed in the hills.

Alamar Celvan Makan Vila

Kalittogai speaks of this. If the epithet Alamar Celvan Makan refers to Lord Siva's son, then it may be referring to the aforesaid Murukavel Vila. In Manimekalai also the same epithet occurs. Both the works give a picture of little children playing with chariots, and compare them to Lord Muruka\ procession in chariot during the festival. So we infer a festival wherein the deity was taken in procession in a chariot.

Sea - Deity Festival

The term Munnir Vilavu occuring in Purananuru is explained by the commentators as the festival celebrated in honour of the sea deity.

Atirai Vila And Ampa Atal

Excepting the epithet Arumperal Atiraiyan in Kalittokai and the commentator's remark that it denotes the Lord in whose honour the Atirai day is celebrated, the single reference that occurs regarding the Atirai Vila is in Paripadal. In the month of Markali, on the day of Tiruvatirai, the Brahmins with the sacred thread started the ceremony, and while they stood holding golden vessels, virgins started Ampa Atal with the prayer that this land may remain unaffected by the heat of the Sun and cool with the showers of rain. It is stated that the Brahmin women, well-versed in religious rites, explained the mode of performance to the youngsters and they, after having a dip in the river Vaigai early in the morning, stood along the riverbed in the frosty weather and dried their clothes in the heat of the fire lit up by the Vedic Brahmins. This reference reminds one of the later Pavai nonpu depicted in the Tiruppavai and Tiruvempavai poems.

Tai Niratal

As already mentioned, women bathing in the river during the month of Tai is spoken of. Also, the reference to Nonpiyar Taiyun irukkai in Narrinai is explained by commentators as the vow wherein those who undertook it completed it by bathing in the river. It is added that according to mythology, the six months duration from Adi to Markali is night for the Devas, and hence the performers of the Puja will not eat during the latter half of the night.

Intira Vila

It is surprising that a festival that is grandly spoken of in the twin epics is just mentioned only once in Ainkurunuru in the Sangam anthologies. But for the reference in the epics, we may not even know that it was a religious festival.

Seasonal Festivals

The occasion of the onset of a season and enjoying its fruits have formed the basic factors of seasonal festivals.

Punal Vila

The arrival of freshes in the rivers-especially Vaikai and Kaviri-were considered an occasion for celebration. It is referred to as Tinir Vila, Tanpatam and Punal Vila. In Ainkurunuru, we find that two tens are solely devoted to the appreciation of season, Paruvam Parattu Pattu and Punalattu-ppattu. Paripadal gives an elaborate portrayal of the festival. Free sex and prosititution form the matrix of this festival. Resembling the 'Holy' festival of North India, sprinkling of coloured water over others is mentioned. Until recently in the far south of peninsular India, in Tirunelveli district, the habit of sprinkling saffron-water was a custom practised to remove any. unwanted hesitancy and shyness between men and women. Hence such seasonal festivals might have had a social purpose behind them that of bringing together men and women, and all the townfolk in general. Even today in Western countries, and in India particularly in the defence force services, sociability-free moving with others and of opposite sex is considered a desirable quality and special celebrations are made solely for giving an opportunity for it.

Venil Vila

It is doubtful whether this is a separate festival or merely another name for Punal Vila. If one closely observes the mode of celebration, one is inclined to infer that during the spiring season, the ancient Tamils enjoyed bahing in the freshes, and worshipping the deity of love, Kaman indulged in free sex and other activities of pleasure. Whatever may be the name, all these three Punal Vila, Venil Vila and Kaman Vila in fact might have

denoted the same festival. Particularly, a verse in Patirruppattu and a reference in Kalittokai support this view.

Kartikai Vila

This name is not given as such in Saagam literature Peru Vila Vilakkam is mentioned in one instance. The act of lighting and a few astronomical references have made the scholars to consider this as the lighting ceremony referred to as Kartikai Vila. It is pointed out that the mode of celebration is the same even today. Pongal and Karaval are prepared and lights are lighted.

Pankuni Vila

This is referred to in just two places. The only fact that we know about this is that it was celebrated in the Chola capital Urantai.

Anti Vila

Maturaikkanchi speaks of a festival celebrated for seven days successively in the evenings.

Chivalry Festivals

While laying the hero-stone, saffron was spread over, peacock feathers and garlands made of Karantai flowers were used for adorning, and a kind of today prepared from rice and called Toppikkal was offered along with a goat as sacrifice. Elaborate measures were taken to celebrate the occasion and they resemble the consecration of a deity in a temple. Hence, though the term festival is not used in literature, it is included as a festival in honour of valour. In fact, no celebration of Valour is termed as festival in Sangam literature. But the performances portrayed raise it to that level.

Puntotai Vila

The place for training youngesters in different warfare was called Kalari, The first day of training was celebrated as Puntotai Vila.

Val Vila

The Patirruppattu line, Tar Purintanna Val Vilavin is interpreted by commentators as Val Vila. However it may be simply referring to an exhibition of valour through a sword fight as it is evidenced by such lines as Mallar Kuliya Vila-vinanum.

Kalarelri

Worthy to be considered a pioneer work to the later Parani literature, a few of the Puram poems depict in detail a celebration called Kalavelvi. The highly imaginative scenes the sterile demonesses cooking a broth with the heads of enemies as ovens, with the logs of Kuvilam tree as firewood, skeletal bones as spoons for which the branches of the Vanni tree served as handles, and Valuvan, the demon - server serving it to the deity Korravai.

Verri Vila

Apart from the general rejoicing over the victorious return of the king, the literature speaks of killing goats, spreading fresh sand under the cool shade of a shamiana covered withg green leaves, offering toddy and waiting for the hero whose victory they are to celebrate. In this context, Untattu a subsect of the Vetcittinai can also be conisdered under this.

Corru Vila

There is a controversy over the second song in Purananuru that speaks of one Utiyanceral who offered Penmcoru in the battle of Mahabaratha. However, the literature, as well as the commentators speak of Peruncorru Vila and Ciru Corru Vila. Penmcoru was offerred with toddy in a place called Arimanavayil amidst great uproar. After the battle was over, in another place atankacconri was distributed. Also, while explaining the lines Mat am torum maivitai vilppa, Niyankukkonta Vilavinum Palave the commentator explains, what is referred to here is Ciru corru Vila, it can also be

considered as Velvi. While elaborating upon this, Avvai Doraisamy Pillai says, "Since there were two, one Peruncorru Vila and another Cirucorru Vila, the commentator differentiates and call this as cirucorru Vila. One of the Patirruppattu verses speaks of the king offering food to the poor, in the battle field itself. Hence, in spite of the existing controversy one

is inclined to accept the custom of giving a feast in honour of the victorious, resembling perhaps to-day Bada Khana in the army.

Eru Taluval

An act of valour not mentioned in Tolkappiyam or any other Sangam literature, is elaborately portrayed in Kalitokai. If considered as a marriage custom this will go under social function. But since courage and valour are the fundamental factors, it is apt to consider it under chivalry festivals. That this is not a mere function or play is proved by the Kalittokai line, Manilai araka ayarntanar cam.

CHAPTER - VIII

TRADE AND COMMERCE

The prosperity and the well being of any nation depend on trade and agriculture. The Sangarn rulers bestowed the utmost care on the development of trade and agriculture. Maduraikkanchi bears testimony to the interest shown by the Sangam rulers.[1161] Nachinarkkiniar, in his commentory on the poem referred above emphasises the importance of trade and agriculture.[1162] There is a vast difference between the commercial activity of today and that of the ancient days. Trade and Commerce were pursued according to the availability of wealth and assistants. Trade and Commerce formed part of the history of the Sangam age. Literary sources and contemporary foreign sources were provide the information related to the trade and commercial activities of the Tamils.

Barter System

[1161] Maduraikkanchi, 120-123.

[1162] Ibid. Comm.

The primitive pattern of exchange of essentials on a barter basis was common in villages. It has been suggested that barter had its origin in the practice of offering gifts to visitors and bards.[1163] Dr. K. K. Pillay's view is that barter could have developed independent of gift barter.[1164] Side by side with barter, in the Sangam age there were bazaars and markets where the monetary system was prevalent. It was the general custom of the people to sell the commodities produced in their respective lands to the neighbours and occasionally to those at a distance.

P. T. Srinivasa Aiyangar suggests that trade in Tamilagam originated, in the Neithal[1165] land because of the occurrence of several references to the fishermen of the Neithal taking salt in carts to be sold at other places. Though, salt was one of

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1163 Singaravelu, Social Life of the Tamils, Kualalampur, 1966 pp. 46 - 56.

1164 Pillay K.K., **A Social History of the Tamils** Madras, 1975 p. 239, F.N.1.

1165 Srinivasa Aiyangar P. T., Pre-Aryan Tamil Culture Madras, 1924, p. 80.

the necessities, paddy and other grains were even more basic requisites and hence it is not possible to agree with the above view.[1166]

With the progress of settled life, paddy and salt became the principal commodities of trade Paddy and Salt served as measure of value.[1167] From one of the Kurunthogai poems, described about a shepherd who gave milk and took instead some grains.[1168] Shepherdesses exchanged card and butter milk for grains, it is said that the proceeds were invested by the shepherdesses on purchase of coins and not of God.[1169] The above facts are revealed Perumpanattruppadai. There arc also references in which a hunter took the meat of his hunt to a farmer and exchanged it for money. Like hunters, Panars used to fish in the ponds. The wives of such Panars used to carry the fish to the villages and barter it for grains. This event is referred to by a poet Orator Pogiyar in Aingurunuru.[1170] Honey, ghee, and edible roots were exchanged for fish and toddy. Articles like venison and fish, fish oil; mutton and arrack were also sold in barter.

One poem in Nattrinai quotes the carrying of paddy to the salt fields and their exchange made for salt. Kalladanar narrates an incident where an old woman of Neithal land instructed a girl to sell the salt produced in the salt field for paddy and that the girl did so.[1171] The salt venders transported such paddy exchanged for salt in boats.[1172] The Kurinji people exchanged the tusks for toddy. The people lived in Kolli hills, went for hunting to retrieve the hunger of their family members. They hunted the elephants and

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1166 Pillay K.K., op. cit; p. 139.

1167 Ahananuru, 60:4; Kuruntogai: 269; Pattinappalai: 29- 30.

1168 "ghNyhL te;J $NohL ngaUk;" Kruntogai.

1169 Perumpanarruppadai-164-165.

1170 Ainkur 47.

1171 Puram. 33.

1172 Pattinppalai:39-30; Kuruntokai : 269.

brought the tusks. The tusks were exchanged for paddy and thus they relieved their hunger.

The housewife exchanged green grain for the thorny fish of the minstrel.[1173] and poured the white paddy into the vessel if the wandering bard who brought the fish.[1174] A different type of barter which can be called 'deferred exchange' was known as kuri etirppu which means taking a loan of fixed quantity of a commodity to be returned at a later date.[1175] Commodities which were complementary to each other in satisfying people's needs were often sold together. Thus sugarcane and rice flakes were together sold in exchange for venison and toddy.[1176] With the sale proceeds of ghee, buffaloes were purchased[1177]. Women sold flowers in exchange for other commodities.[1178]

Coinage

The commerce of the Sangam period was not confined only to barter trade. It has been suggested by N. Subrarmanian in his 'Sangam Polity' that the coins were used for purposes of exchange mostly in the case of foreign trade. It is not possible to agree fully with this view.[1179] Coins were also used for internal and external trade. Maduraikkanchi and Pattinappalai speak about the ships that brought gold from toe west. Madurai Vennaganar tells us that the coins were round like a berry but slightly flattened. He had expressed that the berries which were found stream on the pathways under the trees in Palai looked like the yellow gold coin. Kavan Mullai Butkanar also had expressed that the gold coins looked like the fruit of ooka tree. From Pathittuppattu, we learn that gold and kanam were coins in use. But we are yet to find the archaeological evidences of a mint from where coins were made. While we were able to get Greeco-Roman coins, the non-

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1173 Puram 33.

1174 Ainkuru. 33.

1175 Porunarruppadai, 216-7; Pattinappalai: 29 - 30.

1176 Nattrinai : 118 : 9 - 11.

1177 In towns like Madurai and Kaverippoompattinam the barter economy could not prevail. But in the villages it would be a success.

1178 N. Subramanian, Sangam Polity, p. 232; Puram 163.

1179 Maduarikkanchi, 81 - 83.

availability of the coins of Tamil Nadu in any other parts of the world needs suitable explanation. Therewere Brahmi Inscriptions on the coins made of lead found in a place called Sangam and it is believed that such coins were in the use towards the end of the Sangam age. The term palingu kasu occuring in the Akananuru indicates that some material other than gold was also used for making coins.(20) It is however difficult to determine the material out of which it was made ; perhaps it was shaped out of glass leads or kauri shell;, as may be guessed from its name.

Transport

There existed highways connecting the villages and the towns known as Peruvali. It is learnt that tolls were levied at the entrance of the towns and at cross roads. It is believed that Panduraka blankets and excellent cotton cloth were exported from Madurai. These must have been carried in country carts over rough highways connecting north India with South India. It is doubtful whether trade through inland waterways in the country developed in any considerable measure. The streams running through hill tracts were hardly fitted for the purpose. Even the rivers flowing through the plains were not suitable on account of frequent droughts, floods and whirlpools. But the coastal waterways and backwaters must have to some extent useful in the transportation of commodities. Tamils had a good knowledge about the trade winds.[1180] When the Sangam poet Vennikkuyithiar praising Karikalan praised him that he belonged to the traditional family which had a mastering of knowledge about the trade winds.[1181] The coastal waterways and backwater must have to some extent been useful in the transportation of commodities. The reference found in the classics to small vessels like the kalam, punai, patri, odam, ainbi and toni indicate that traffic

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[1180] Akam 31; 12; Puram 343 : 5.

[1181] Puram. 166.

though streams and lakes must have taken place.[1182] Mention is made of the beaten paths in the hilly tracts and arid regions[1183]. The tracts were arduous, moreover passing through them was often risky on account of the dacoits from way side robbers[1184]. Buffaloes, asses, and carts were utilised for trade.[1185] Though we hear about the import of the horses, we do not know whether they were used for the transport of commodities. The Mule was called Athiri. There is a reference in Paripadal that people rode on Athiri in Vaigai bed at Madurai. In Akam and Nattrinai, also there are references to the use of Athiri for riding Sirupanattuppadai and some other literatures also mention about Donkey carts. Yet, it may be said that carts drawn by horses were not used for transportation of materials of trade.

Vanigaecattukkal

The traders used to proceed to various villages in small groups called Vanigaecattukkal They carried the commodities in carts or on donkeys. The carts were drawn by bullocks. Perumpanattuppadai informs that merchants travelled with papper wrapped in bundles to the size of jack fruits and leaded on the backs of asses. During the period following the Sangam, those persons who did big business and earned huge amounts of wealth were awarded Atti Poo and 'Atti Pattam'

Foreign trade

The Foreign trade of the Tamils included trade with the other parts of India also. From the evidence found in the Arthasastra, it is learnt that there existed trade relationship in the 4th century B.C. between Magadha and Dakshinapadha including the

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1182 Madurai. 81-83; 321-323; Pattinappalai, 126-131; 299; 2-3 Akam. 149:9-10; Puram 66: 1-2; 23-24; 50; 1-2 343:5-6.

1183 Porunarattuppadai 49; Kuruntogai 329:3; Puram. 106.

1184 Akam. 89:10-13 op.cit.

1185 Akam. 343.

Tamil country. Among the articles which found their way to the royal treasury at Pataliputra, Kautilya mentions precious stones (ratna) from Tamraparni and Pandya kavata and Vaidurya or precious stones from Kerala.[1186] Tamilians had developed commerce to a very high degree in the Kalinga country and so the Kalinga ruler Kharavela thought it would be dangerous to his rule. His attempts to destroy the Tamil merchant communities are found in the Hathigumpa Inscription of Kharavela. Tamil merchants at Amarawathi donated liberally to the construction of Buddhistic Stupa at Amarawathi.[1187]

From very early times, Tamil Nadu carried on an extensive trade with foreign lands. In the foreign markets, the commercial products, pepper, ginger, cardamon, cinnamon, sandal wood, turmeric and saffron were in great demand. Rice, cotton, pearls and certain animals and birds from the rest of Tamil Nadu were also in demand.

Early Relationship

On the question of Tamilakam's earlier trade relationship with foreign nations conflicting views have been held. Sayce, in his Hibbert lectures on the basis of the following assumption points out the commercial intercourse between Sumeria and South India. The first fact mentioned by him is that Indian teak, presumably belonging to Malabar in South India, was found in the ruins of Ur, the capital of the Sumerian Kings. The second fact is that the word 'Sindhu' or Muslin is mentioned in an ancient Babylonian list of clothing.[1188] In respect of the teak wood found in the ruins of the temples of Moon-God at Ur, it is possible that it was imported from Kerala, but this fact is not indisputably established. It is not certain that at that early period of time no nearer region had teak wood which could have been utilised at Ur. "As regards Sindhu

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[1186] Pillay K.K., op. cit. p. 241.

[1187] Notes on the Amarawathi Stupa, J. Burgess, 1812. Archaeological Survey of India. p. 80.

[1188] Sayce: Hibbert Lecturers, 1887 (London, 1889).

the occurrence of 'S' in the word has been indicated that muslin did not reach. P.T. Srinivasa Aiyangar attempted to trace the existence of commercial relationship between South India and West Asia from so early a period as the 4th millenmium B.C. on the basis of similarity of words found in Tulu and Kannada, neither of which had such an early origin.[1189] Dr. K. K. Pillay pointed out that imagination was stretched too far and the piece of reasoning was at best conjectural.

The view advanced that the 3rd Millennium B. C. is also based on doubtful basis. Muslin and spices were conveyed from South India to Egypt.[1190] But it cannot be asserted as has done that they went from Kerala. The principal articles imported into Egypt were gold, silver, ivory, ebony, rare animals and plants which were mostly products from North Eastern and Equatorial Africa.[1191] The view, that in the 15th century B. C, only trade developed is also not definite. In the Bible, there is a reference to cinnamon as an ingredient in the perfume used in the ritual at the Tabernacle erected by Moses. It is argued that the maritime trade of Kerala was in vogue in 1490 because it is believed that the Tabernacle was built in 1490. There is no direct reference to the import from Kerala. In the old Testament, there are references to certain spices and other articles in connection with the visit of queen sheba to king solomon of Issad sometimes about 990 B.C Among the commodities, peacocks and sandalwood are also mentioned. It is definitely certain that 'Tuki', the Hebrew for peacock is derived from the Tamil word Tokai. In Malaipadukadam and Kurinjippattu the word Tokai denotes peacock only.[1192] The fact that peacocks went from Tamilakam in the 10th century B. C. shows that there existed some trade relationships.

1189 Srinivasa Iyengar P.T., History of the Tamils (p.39). It is contended, by him that Muslim must have been exported directly by sea from South India and that the Babylonian word is derived from the old Dravidian word ‘sindhi’ which in Tulu and Kannada denotes even today a piece of cloth.

1190 Schoff W.H., The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea, New Delhi, 1974, p. 3.

1191 Kennedy J., Early Commerce of Babylon with India, Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, 1898, p. 243.

1192 Malaipadukadam:44; Kurinjippattu; 191.

An active sea-borne commerce was carried on from about 700 B. C. between Babylon and the East. This is proved by the history of the Chinese. An early colony of South Indian merchants is believed to have been established in Babylon where continued to flourish til! the 7th Century A. D. Under the Persian Emperor Darius in the 5th Century B. C, the Indian commerce was further extended and the merchants continued the trade. Loan words from the Tamil language in Hebrew and Aramaic confirm the existence of trade relations in the past.[1193]

1193 Betel = Vettrilai; Hel= Elam; Keri = Kari; Onetry = Arici. Zengiri = Injiver; Ahal = Ahil, Tukt = Togai.

Trade with Greeks and Romans

The Greeks entered the field of maritime commerce from about the 3rd century B. C. They too adopted some of the Tamil names of commodities in which they traded. The Greeks have oriza for rice from the Tamil aricíginger is derived from Latin zingiber which was derived from ziggiberies which ultimately is traced to Tamil injiver. After the age of Darius, the foundation of the city of Alexandria after the expedition of Alexander provided an impetus to this commercial expansion. The Greeks became the carrier of the South Indian Trade with the west. Thus certain Tamil words found their way into the Greek vocabulary. Not only, the similarity of words but also more dependable evidence from early Tamil Literature also bears testimony to this trade. The western merchants who visited were known as Yavanas, which is derived from the Greek Iaones, the name of the Greek nation in their own language. In the old Sanskrit epic poetry, the word Yavana is invariably used to denote the Greeks.[1194] Similarly in ancient Tamil poems also, the name Yavana appears to have been applied exclusively to the Greeks and Romans. The poet Nakkirar addresses the Pandyan Prince Nan-maran in the following words :

"O! Mara, whose sound is ever victorious." Spend thou they days in peace and joy, drinking daily out of golden cups presented by thy handmaids, the cool and fragrant wine brought by the Yavanas in their good ships.[1195]

The Yavanas alluded to by there poeis, were undoubtedly the Egyptian Greeks because from the Periplus, it is learnt that the Greek merchants from Egypt brought wine, brass, lead, glass etc. for sale to Muziri and purchased pepper, betel, ivory . pearls and fine Muslins. The Greeks sailed from Egypt in the month of July and arrived at

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1194 Weber's History of Indian Literature, p.220.

1195 Puram 56.

Muziri about forty days[1196]. The Romans succeeded the Greeks as the carriers of trade after the time of Julius Ceasar. As the Indian seas were infested by pirates, the Greek merchants brought with them cohorts of archers on board their ships. The superior arms and discipline of the Roman soldiers inspired in the Tamils a desire to become better acquinted with the Romans and to share their civilization. The Pandyan King was the first to realise the benefit of trade with the Romans.

The Yavanas are known to have been employed by South Indian merchants for rendering certain kinds of service for which they were specially qualified. For instance, the Roman soldiers were enlisted in the armies of certain Pandya rulers. The Mullaippattu depicts the personal appearance of the Yavanas, their distinctive habits as well as their arranging skill in certain arts and crafts. It explains that their spoken languages was unintelligible to the Tamils and consequent by the Yavanas were obliged to use gesture in order to make, themselves understood.[1197] The Purananuru speaks of the delicious wine which was eagerly sought for by kings and courtiers. The literary evidences tallies with the data furnished by the Greek writers. Pliny, and Piotemy describe the conditions of trade in the early centuries of the Christian Era. Not only internal and external evidences but also the archaeological evidences bear testimony to the trade of the Tamils with Greeks and Romans. Archaeological evidence at Arikkamedu revealed that Poduke which is identifiable with modern Pondicherry was a centre of trade with Graeco-Roman world. Mortimer Wheeler concludes that the site was occupied by the Romans at the end of the 1st century A. D. and that it was deserted sometime in the 2nd century A. D. After the 2nd century A. D. there was marked decline of Roman trade with Tamilagam because of the crowing anarchy in the Roman empire.[1198] The Roman trade with the Tamil Land and other parts of India was carried

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[1196] Wilfred H. Schoff, op.cit., pp. 205 – 207.

[1197] Mullaippattu, 59 - 66.

[1198] Neelakanta Sastri K.A., The Colas, Madras, 1955, p. 85.

on, on such a large scale that, as stated by Pliny, there was no year in which India did not rest the Roman Empire of atleast fifty millions of sesterces sending in return wares which were sold for a hundred times their original value.[1199] There appeared an increasing protest against the import trade which resulted in the drain of bullion.[1200] But the trade did not thrive when "Alaric, the Goth levied his war indemnity from Rome in A. D. 409 in terms included the delivery of 3000 pounds of pepper".[1201]

As regards the trade with the Arabs, there are references in Pathittruppattu. The traders from Arabia called the market at Muziri as pandhar. Pandhar is an Arabic term.

Trade with the East

With the East, too there was a brisk trade from an early period. The earliest trade relationship with the East appears to have commenced with China. On the basis of the Chinese annals, Schoff thinks that the trade with China flourished as early as the 7th century B.C. confirms the fact of Indian commodities having reached China. It may be mentioned here that a Chinese coin of the 2nd century B.C. has been discovered at Chandravalli in Mysore. But definite proofs are not available to prove the earliest trade relationship with China. Tamilagam had trade contacts with South and South East Asia including Ceylon, Burma, Java, Malaya and regions farther East. Though there is only one literary evidence about the trade of the Tamils with Ceylon in Sangam literature archaeological monuments at Ceylon testify to the trade contact.[1202] At Anurathapura, the ancient capital of Ceylon, Brahmi Inscriptions are there. This inscription refers to a big business house at Aaura-thapuram in the 2nd century B. C. As regards Burma, Ptolemy's 'Golden Chryse' was apparently a translation of Swarnabhumi. The author of

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1199 Nat. History, IV-26.

1200 Gibbons, Decline and Fall of Roman Empire, Ch. 3.

1201 Tacitus, Annals, III. 53.

1202 Pattinappalai II – 185-191.

the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea records that very large ships called Colandia sailed to China from the ports on the Corornandel coast of South India.

Champa, the present Armam obviously owed its name to the ancient capital of the Chola country, Kaverippoompattinam which was also known as Oiampfk. The fact that name of this Chola city, which was also a famous port was adopted by this place suggested active commercial contact. It may be added that the oldest inscription in the region of Chamba, the Vo-Chant inscription, as it is called is unquestionably South Indian in its script.[1203] Malaya must have had commercial relationship with Tamil Nadu from an early time though specific details are not available. Several common Malay words like those for leaf, washerman, couple and marriage pledge are indubitably traced to Tamil origin. Sumatra, Java, Bali and the islands farther east had close cultural contact with South India during the first two centuries A. D. The Dravidian tribal names among the Batak in Sumatra are indicative of early association. The so called East Indian islands of Indonesia were called Savagam or Savaganadu. Among the discoveries at Arikkamedu are celadon ware sherds which are stated to have been common in China and South East Asia. Therefore, Roman ships preceding to China and South East Asia touched ports in Tamil Nadu.

Internal Trade

There were established markets or bazaars called ankadi in the bigger towns, while elsewhere hawkers brought most of the things to the doorstep of the households. In some cases, articles were sold at the centre of manufacture; e.g. salt was in the case of those who resided in the coastal trades sold near the salt pans.[1204] There were two kinds of traders: *(a)* those who manufactured and sold at the place of manufacture and (b) those who went about selling the goods the retailers

1203 Col. Berini, J.R.A.S, 1904, pp. 234-247.

1204 Maduraik. 117.

who were mostly hawkers. There were two kinds of markets in the leading cities like Pukar and Madurai.[1205] There were Allankadi ("Evening or Night markets) as distinguished from Nallankadi (Day time markets.)[1206] The market places were also called Avanam.[1207] In the market, large varieties and large quantities of goods were sold and purchased and crowds thronged and busy transactions took place. A notable description of the heavy transactions in the bazaar is provided in the Maduraikkanchi but it is open to doubt whether the accounts picture can be taken to provide a perfectly accurate picture. Nevertheless despite exaggerations in respect of details the general picture of busy activity may be to have been true.

An idea of the elaborate descriptions of the wide variety of articles sold in the markets of Kaverippoompattinam or pukar as it was commonly known textile goods, bronze and copper-ware dolls, perfumes of various kinds, flowers, sandal paste, scented powders, false hair and dye were some of the articles for sale. Besides these, were edible food stuffs of different kinds like rice, cakes, fish, mutton, vegetables, salt and grains of various varieties were in abundance. Though paddy was the principal crop other grains like the varagu and tinai were also sold. Horse grain, black grain, millets beans and sugarcane were the other important crops. Several varieties of paddy were cultivated, the names of which are known from Sangam works. They are vennel, Aivananel, Torai, Chennel and Pudunel. The[1208] Chennel and Pudunel were apparently more refined varieties cultivated in the futile plains.[1209] Ornaments and jewels besides fanciful articles made by coppersmith and workers in silver and bronze were also available.[1210] The bazars at Madurai appear to have been bigger in size and more

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[1205] Maduraik. 365.

[1206] Akam. 93-10.

[1207] Pattinappalai, 158; Akam 122-3.

[1208] Maduraik, 287-8; Malai, 114-5.

[1209] Purananuru, 61, Pattinappalai, 12-14.

[1210] Maduraik 511-21.

notable in the volume of business transacted than those at Kavirippoompattinam. There were streets where diamonds, rubies and pearls were sold. Streets where dress, corn and miscellaneous articles were sold also existed. In Madurai too, there were the Nalankadi and Allankadi. Many foreigners were found engaged in wholesale transactions.[1211] From the scanty evidence available in the literary works of the age, it may be inferred that the dealings were fair. It is learnt that merchants openly announced the profit which they made.

Units of Measurement

The common vessel for measuring grain was known as ampanam, this was in all probability the precursor of the well known Marakkal. There is however no means of knowing whether the sub-division, Padi had come into usage during the Sangam age. But Nali the equivalent of Padi was known, as can be seen from the Purananuru and the Mullaippattu.[1212] Balances seem to have been used even under barter. They were more regularly used in larger transactions in markets and bazars. The Kol denoted the balance rod[1213] Kannam is the name applied to the goldsmiths balance.[1214] It may be observed that Ka denoted a rod from the extremities of which wooden pans were suspended.[1215] Presumably rich merchants used yard sticks made of ivory.[1216]

Trading Communities

Though generally industry and the consequent trade were carried on by groups of hereditary craftsmen pursuing their profession at the ancestral work place rarer instances of persons of any one caste being engaged in activity not prescribed for their

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1211 Ibid. 503; 22.

1212 Puram. 189:5; Mullaippattu, 9.

1213 Akam. 349.

1214 Ibid: 317-8.

1215 Kalittokai, 142-157; Perumpanarruppadai; 171.

1216 Puram. 39.

caste.[1217] Nakkirar. the poet considered to be a brahmin was engaged in the coneh-cutting industry. It is interesting to note that goldsmiths and even blacksmiths were poets of Sangam age. For instance Seykolian, Vannaganar, was a poet who composed song 363 of the Akananuru, Madurai kollan Vennaganar was the author of the song 285 of Nattrinai. We also hear of certain traders in particular commodities like the Kulavanigam, Aruvaivanigam, and the dealer in palm leaves A few of the poets belonged to the class of merchants Madurai Aruvai Vangan Ilavettanar, Madurai Kulavanigan Seettalai Sattanar, Uraiyur Ilampon Vanigar and Kaverippoompattinathu Pon Vanigar, Beri Sattanar, Uraiyur Ilampon Vanigar and Kanian Punkundarayattanar were some poets belonging to the merchant community of the Sangam epoch.

[1217] N. Subramani. Sangam. Policy : p. 23.

Imports and Exports

All the articles prepared in Egypt for the markets of Tamilakam as well as all the produce of Tamilakam itself finally centred on the Chola Coast. ''Horses were brought from distant lands beyond the seas, pepper was brought in ships; gold and precious stones came from the mountain of north; sandal and akil came from the mountain towards the west: pearls from the southern seas and coral from the eastern seas. The produce of the regions watered by the Ganges; all that is grown on the banks of the Kaveri articles of food from Elam or Sri Lanka and the manufactures of" kalakatn were brought to the markets of Pukar.[1218]

In the bazaar of Pukar, dyes scented powder, sandal paste, flowers and aromatic wood like akil were sold in abundance. Tamilakam imported from the Yavanas the excellent wine. The expression Yavanar nan kalam tanda tan kamal teral occurs in a stanza in Purananuru refers to this article of import. The Yavanas exported to Tamilakam sugar candy also. A lamp shaped like a black swans (the odiman) was an article in great demand; the peculiarity of this type of lamp was the flame in it did not flicker but was a steady flame and it was a novelty to the Tamils.[1219] Some of these lamps were like statues (Pavat vilakku) bearing in their folded palms the takali or the can containing the oil to light the lamp.[1220] Tamilakam exported her gold ornaments. The Periplus testifies to the South Indian export of coconut oil, while Pliny includes bananas, rice, millets and various medical plant products, including tamarind. The imports into Muziri are given by the Periplus as "a great quantity of coin, topaz, thin clothing, linen, antimony, coral, crude glass, copper, tin, lead, moderate quantities of wine and wheat only for the sailors, for this is not dealt in by the merchants there". The exports from

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1218 Pattu. 9: 185-191.

1219 Ibid. 4:316-318.

1220 Ibid. 7: 101 – 103.

there included the pepper corning from kottanora (Kuttanadu) great quantities of fine pearls, ivory and silk cloth.[1221]

Though Tamilakam exported fine varieties of cloth, she seemed to have imported certain varieties of cotton fabrics from other places herself. Kalingam and Kalagam were varieties of cloth imported from the Kalinga land and Malaya. Large ships laden with "Tamarind which was mixed up with jaggery and salt and dried mutton chops, carried the large ornaments and horses tamed with difficulty to the Yavana Land."[1222] Pearls, gold, diamond and ivory were the chief articles the Tamils exported to the North. It is interesting to note that among the exports from India to the West, tigers, elephants, hounds, parrots, peacocks, serpents and pythons were included.

Seaports

The trade of Sangam Tamilakam was brisk and had developed all the ancillary requirements of harbours, shipping and light houses, etc.

There were several sea-ports both on the western and eastern coasts of Tamilakam. We have some information about them from the early, Sangam classics as well as the later Tamil works, They are amply suplemented by the data of the foreign writers of the 1st and 2nd centuries A. D. The harbour was called Pukar in Kaverippoompattinam.

Kaverippoompattinam

The Pattinappalai gives a fairly detailed description of the harbour of Pukar and the activities there. The harbour especially was a safe harbour even for the bigger vessels- They could enter the harbour without removing the carge or slacking sail; and

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1221 Wilfred H. Sehoff loc. cit.

1222 Pattu. 6:318;539.

yet be quite safe and stable.[1223] The commodities kept and the seal put by the Chola officers are recorded in the Pattinappalai.[1224]

Korkai

On the east coast, next in importance to Pukar was the town of Korkai, the primary sea port of the Pandyas. Korkai was the chief town of the leading Parathavar or fishermen of the region. Ahananuru speaks about the glory of the pearls of Korkai. The grace beauty and the fineness of the pearls are described in some of the Sangam poems.[1225] Maduraikkanchi, Sirupanattuppadai, Ahananuru, and Nattrinai poems contain information about Korkai. All the references about Korkai when compared with the foreign accounts, they tally with each other. Korkai, the chief town in the country of the Parathavar tribe was the seat of pearl fishery and the population of the town consisted mostly of pearl divers and chank cutters. The pearl fishery was a source of such large revenue to the Pandyan Kingdom.

Muziri

On the west coast according to the Sangam works, the most prominent harbour was Muziri identical with the Muziris of the foreign writers and modern Cranganore.[1226] Pliny speaks of Muciri as the most important port of India. Other writers like the author of the Periplus, and Plotemy also speak of the busy traffic at Muziri. Their accounts are confirmed by the poets of the Sangam age.

Other ports

1223 Puram. 30; Pattu-6:541 Pattu. 3:349-357. Periplus called it as Kamara and Ptolemy called it Khaberis.

1224 Pattu. 9: 129- 136.

1225 Ibid. 6:135; 257; Akam. 9:201.

1226 Akam; 142; Puram. 343.

Tondi is appearing in the Sangam works now a small village in South Malabar.[1227] But the identification of the other ports mentioned by Periplus, Naoora, Nelkunda and Bakara is not easy. Plotemy, the Alexandrian Geographer of the 2nd century A.D. refers to a few more like Baramagara and Kalaikarias between Tundis and Muziris and further South Vaikkarai. Podoperour, Semne and Koreowa. V. Kanagasabai identified Bramagara with Brahmakulam and Kalikarias with Chalakuri, but these await further confirmation.

Warehouses

Warehouses for storing the merchandise were built on the beach near the fisherman's quarters: 'Limitless quantities of goods were collected in these warehouses and they lay there waiting to be shipped abroad Pattinappalai while mentioning about Kaverippoompattinam mentions that the Chola officials affixed the tiger seal on the bags of cargo.[1228]

Light houses

The Chief ports had light houses called Kalankaraivilakku Chudar the bright light that beckons the ships.[1229] The light houses were not specially built structures serving exclusively the purpose of beckoning ships but were powerful lamps set up on top of the tallest building on the coast.

Traders Characteristics

The trading community of the Tamils differed in their principle from the others, They earned through trade for the welfare of the humanity They wished the whole community to happily live without hunger. They lived according to the principle of

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[1227] Akam; 10.

[1228] Pattu. 9: 134-136.

[1229] Pattu. 4: 340-352.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing research reveals the former fallen greatness of Sangam Tamils. The Sangam age is considered to be the golden age of the Tamils. The sangam literature and foreign accounts shed light on the political, social and economic life of ancient Tamils. The vast majority of the inhabitants led a tribal life yet sections of the people made considerable progress in their cultural pursuits. Tribalism exister together with urbanity and so also did villages and towns and minor chieftains and major powers. The determination of the age of Sangam Spavined from Fifth Century B.C. to second century.

The form of Government of ancient Tamils as gleaned out of literature is monarchy. The epithets for the king are Ko Kovalan, irai, iraivan and porunan. The words irai and iraivan have two meanings, God and king. These words are meaningful and helps to interpret the probable basis for the evolution of the administrative institution of monarchy.

The sangam works give a fairly much information on political changes in ancient Tamilagam. As in any other society the Tamils were divided into tribes with their own leaders, habits and pursuits. Through progress in settled life they came to possess particular territories and through conflicts and alliances transformed themselves into political powers. Tolkappiyar refers to twelve political divisions called nadu. By the Sangam age there came into existence three major powers referred to as muvender and number of smaller powers. The three major powers the pandyas in the south the Cholas in the east and the cheras in the west occupied. SanTamilNadu the land of the pure Tamil. A part from the three powers there existed a number of minor powers who exercised and Independent or Semi Independent status.

The physical texture of the ancient South Indian landscape with its mountains and rivers, and clearly defined contours have induced the Tamils to divide the landscape on the basis of geographical set up. The hilly tracts and the mountain

regions are called Kurinchi; the forest tracts are known as Mullai the fertile regions of the river-valleys are called Marutham, the littoral landscape of the seashores is known as Neithal and the waste land and the sandy desert are called Palai. These five fold division of the landscape gave an impetus to the development of Tamil Culture. Modern Scientific developments have shown that the influence of geography in determining the character and culture of a people could not be ignored. The Tamil culture appears to have evolved in different shades and forms in these five-fold regions, which ultimately, reached its high water-mark in the river valleys. The division of the landscape formed the basis for the ancient Tamil poetry which furnishes its apodictic illustration of its independent origin and development.

The basic unit of the ancient Tamil Society was the family. A group of families constituted the different stratas of the Tamil society. Hence, the household life of the Tamil people played a vital role in the development of Tamil culture. The pleasant domestic life has been idealised and glorified as a supreme state in the life of every human-being. Love and virtue are the essential qualities of the householders and they are considered as the symbol and fruit of the family life. Among all those (who strive for future happiness), he is greatest who lead a happy family life. This life has been extolled as the greatest virtue to be practiced.

The better-half of the man is acclaimed as the true partner in life who possesses all the wifely virtues and spends according to the income of her husband. An excellent wife is a blessing to the home and that has bearing the good children is its precious ornament. The wife has been extolled as the “Illuminator” of the family.

The acquisition of intelligent children has been considered as the greatest blessings in the life of a man. There are number of fascinating pictures of the sweet home in the Sangam literature which bear ample testimony to the significance attached

to the family life. The duties of the domestic life have been portrayed in the following terms.

“Showering presents to the goodmen. Honouring the ascetics and the righteous, Entertaining guests, and friends and relatives are the sacred duties of the noble Householders."

There seems to have been a popular saying about the Tamils of the Sangam age, that those are the fortunate parents, who won lasting fame in this as well as in the next world by having a son; they are the most blessed. These cherished ideals of the sweet home reveals the eagerness and attachment of the ancient Tamils to the house-hold life which has been called lllaram, i.e., righteous married life. One could not find a parallel to this type of reverance and respect shown to the family life in any other ancient civilizations of the world.

The Tamils of the Sangam Age are well known for their love and affection to their brothren Frora, the dawn of history, the Tamils have freely associated with the foreigners of far and near. They have developed a sense of service towards them, which has been called in Tamil as Viruntu Ompal i.e., hospitality. Even today, they practise hospitality as a kind of virtue or an aspect of righteous living. Tiruvalluvar, the great poet-philosopher of TamilNadu pays tributes to the act of hospitality in the following words. “what for the wise toil and set up homes? It is to feed the guest and help the strangers”

There is hardly any reference to the act of hospitality as a sacred duty of the householder as it was practiced by the Tamils in any other countries of the ancient days.

Ancient Tamils were known for their love towards flowers. They said it with flowers not only in love but also in war, in friendship, in hospitality and even in the relief of poverty and want. When strangers passed through a village, they were offered flowers as a sign of extending warm welcome to them. The bards adorned their musical instruments with garlands of flowers. Mullai, a variety of jasmine has been considered as a symbol of chastity. Not only the girls and married ladies adorned their hair do's with

flowers but also the males used to wear the strings of flowers in their tufts. Garlands and wreaths in various forms and sizes were in use. Care of the predominant totemic symbols of the three royal dynasties of Tamil Nadu was garlands made out of a particular variety of flowers. The Cheras had the tender palmyra buds, the Pandyas used neem flowers and the Cholas had a fascination for Atti (Mountain ebony) flowers.

During the periods of mourning and distress, flowers and garlands were not used by the Tamils. Widows were prohibited from using the flowers as an adornment. This healthy tradition is followed even today. The Tamils yet revere flowers as an auspicious symbol and as a token of love and affection.

Smearing the gingelly oil from head to foot and then taking bath either in the cold or hot water has become a custom among the Tamils. Child birth was considered ceremonially unclean in many parts of the world. But they were never accustomed to purify the mother, from the pollution by performing a ceremonial oil-bath. In the Sangam period, this type of ceremonial oil bath of the mother was known as Neyyani mayakkam. In the beginning and end of solemn occasions, ancient Tamil people used to take oil baths. This custom was prevalent among the Greeks and Romans who used olive oil for their baths. The practice of taking oil bath was a widespread habit only among the Tamils, the Greeks and the Romans of the ancient world. From this, we are inclined to think that the climate of the Mediterranean and the tropical regions might have induced these three nations to indulge in this custom to indulge in this custom to find comfort and gratification in the heat of the scorching sun.

Ancient Tamil people wore white attire at the time of solemn occasions like starting from home to the battle-fields and also for the birth day celebrations. The birth-day celebration was known as the Vellani Vila. But in the Medineval Age, white dress has been looked with an air of condescension and it has been treated as an inauspicious dress in India, whereas in the Europe, it has gained significance as a dress of dignity and,

decorum. It may be the result of religious fends in India. A sect of Jains used to wear white-dress. So, it has become a symbolic representation of a particular sect.

Modern Indian women, especially, the South Indian women can be easily identified from her novel mode of dress i.e., from the saree, they usually wear. Now a days it has become a fashion even among the ladies of Europe and America to be dressed with Sarees as an evening dress. The men of South India, wear Vetti or dhothi in a particular form, which has also gained popularity among the people of the world.

But in the pre-historic period, most probably in the Neolithic period, this type of dress for men and women might have come into vogue among the Tamils. Gradually, this mode of dress spread throughout India. After the advent of the Muslims in India, their form of dress gained popularity in the North India. But it never became a favourable dress in Tamil Nadu, It has become a national dress of the Tamils without any reservations even among the followers of alien religious creeds.

Ornaments made out of pearls and with pearls were in great demand. There are some references to the objections raised by the Roman Senators to restrict the import of pearls from Damirike (Tamilakam), which drained a large quantity of gold every year from their country. In the marriage and other pleasant functions, we use vermilion and turmeric as auspicious symbols and sacred objects. Besides this, we freely give, take and chew the betal-leaves on such occasions. These appear to be a legacy from our ancestors, which have found a prominent place in the heritage of the world. Tamils of the Sangam period had a great attraction towards the river vallies. They had their settlements on the banks of the perennial rivers and established their important towns, cities and capitals there. In harnessing the natural resources, they have made Herculean attempts to control the floods and preserve the excess water for the cultivation of crops through-out the year. They have constructed huge dams and large lakes. Dravidians

(Tamils) were responsible for the significant achievements of India in the art of constructing irrigational dams and canals throughout India.

There is a poem in Purananuru, which expresses the appeal of a poet to the Pandya King Neduncheliyan, the victor of Talaiyalankanam. The poet advises the King to construct irrigation tanks wherever possible to help the peasants and to

improve the prosperity of the kingdom. This poem serves as an unfailing witness to the irrigational works of the ancient Tamils.

The Sangam Tamils were keen on acquiring. Such knowledge as deserved to be acquired, acquisition of knowledge in the Sangam period was understand to be of two Kinds, that is the knowledge of Humanities and the knowledge of sciences. The Humanities was represented by the study of languages and literature and the science by mathematics. The pattern of Education in the Sangam period was not merely reading and under ordering of books but listening to learned persons. It is noted that education of a Seevlar nature was not the preserve of any particular community or caste sex or station in life. The society Joined the primary responsibilities of educating the children or their parents.

It is very interesting to note that "there are two, an ecclesiastical calendar and civil one. The ecclesiastic calendar of the Tamils like other Asiatic calendars, including the Telugu calendar is lunar. But the civil calendar is solar, truly and completely solar and is not, like ours, an originally lunar calendar modified to fit the solar year it is unique, and that it aims at a degree of astronomical accuracy and consistency beyond that of any other calendar in use it proves the independence and continuous activity of Dravidian science in the past of India, least exposed to non-Dravidian influences. This statement points out the significance of the calendar adopted by the ancient Tamils.

Pattini cult is one of the significant features of Tamil culture. The deification of a 'chaste wife' as the 'Goddess of chastity' originated in Tamil Nadu during the Sangam age. Kannaki, the heroine of the Epic Silappathikaram has been deified as Pattini Devi by llanko Adikal.

Deification of Kannaki has brought in its wake, a train of legends and varied cults, in which Pattini figures as one of the incarnations of the Goddess Sakti of the Hindu

religion. This cult has found a congenial atmosphere to thrive in Sri Lanka at the end of the Sangam age. There are many shrines to this deity in Ceylon. It is the only female deity in the pantheon of divine beings worshipped next to Taya by the Sinhalese.

The Tamils of Sangamage seems to have fashioned for themselves a society where religion did play a dominant role and consider by influence. Individual and social thinking and beliefs but was not allowed to seriously temper with the very practical and worldly life which they chose to life. It has been claimed that "the greatest gift of South India to Hinduism is God Siva. The Rig Vedic Rudrs is an absolutely independent personality, even independent of Siva, of the proto-Indian times. But an effort was made here to amalgamate the two elements of Rudra and Siva-without however introducing the name of Siva. This has been done by the addition of some more elements and attributes which have been (more or less) originally considered as the qualities of Siva. Dilating on this point. The cult of Murugan goes back to the pre-historic period in Tamil Nadu. He was conceived as a territorial deity of the Kurinchi region. He has been called as the God of youth and beauty. Valli the daughter of hunter's chief has been identified with one ol the mistress of Murugan. In the beginning of the Christian era, Murugan has been transformed into Subramanya or Karthikeya in a new setting with the assimilation of North Indian legends and beliefs. The consort of Lord Siva and the female manifestation his energy and power is known as Uma or Parvati. In the tradition of the Tamils, she is known as Kottravai. Scholars believe that the expression Uma is only an Aryan rendering of the original Ammo, of the Dravidian term. Even Mayon and Mai are believed to be the old (pre-Aryan) Tamil names, subsequently identified with the later Aryan God Vishnu- The eailiest reference to the pastoral Krishna occurs only in the Tamil Literature. His sweet heart Nappinnai, the prototype of Radha of later period appears to be a maid of the pastoral people of ancient Tamil Nadu. The Krishna cult might have been carried to the North by tribes of the Deccan like Abhiras. Reference to Gods by complex Ion is a sure indication of the

prevalence of idol worship in the Sangam Age. Pucey, the term in Tamil implies the mode of worshipping the deity with flowers. This word has been borrowed into Sanskrit as puja in the Later Vedic period. This method of flower offerings to Gods represents the practice of the Tamils from time immemorial. Homa or the fire ritual and puja, or the flower Ritual, represent two distinct words of religious thought or conception. The flower ritual or the Puja is unknown to the Vedic religion; their ritual is everywhere Homa. This categorical expression of an Indologist clearly points out the indebtedness of the various religious tenets to the Tamils which are following the flower offerings as a form of worship. The concept of self-surrender at the feet of God has been enunciated and elucidated in great detail by the preceptors of Saiva and Vaishnava theology of later periods. In no other religious tenets of India, as well as of the accident, we find such a lofty ideal of relinquishing the worldly attachments and submit oneself at the feet of the God to seek solace for the yearning heart. Tiruvalluvar, the illustrious sage and sear of Tamil Nadu enunciates the doctrine of self-surrender for the first time in ancient India. He instructs that 'those who find refuge at the great feet of Him who lives in the heart (of the devotees) live eternally in Heaven. "To those who are united in the feet of Him who is without desire or aversion, never experience sufferings. “They alone escape from sorrow who surrender themselves at the feet of Him who is unique in every respects.” “The stormy seas of wealth and sensual pleasure cannot be traversed except by those who cling to the feet of the God who is the ocean of Righteousness,” ''None can swim the great sea of births, but those of who are united in the feet of God. These verses have been the main source for the exposition of the doctrine of self-surrender at the feet of God in the Mediaeval period. No other religion except Christianity advocates the doctrine of self-surrender at the feet of the Supreme Being, This concept can be claimed as a significant contribution of the Tamils in . the sphere of philosophical speculations. Ancient Tamils included the most popular Fine Arts viz., Music, Dance and Drama in their concept of Muttamil. They have given equal importance to Music and

Dance and treated them in par with the Tamil language and literature. We could not find a parallel to this concept of Fine Arts in any quarters of the world. The musical instruments like yal (lute), kulal (Flute; (not the Nagaswaram of this century) and Mulavu (two-faced drumj, the proto-type of modern mritankam are the most important orchestra that enhanced the value of the melodious music of the ancient Tamils. The Akam poems of the Sangam Age excells in form and theme as well as expression and elucidation of the subtle ideas and the tender feelings of the lovers. They depict and glorify only the life of the lovers who have succeeded in their love affair. When we compare these Akam poems with the love poems of other countries, we find to our surprise that they deal with the disappointment and desertion of lovers. The moral philosophy of the Tamils is enshrined in Tirukkural one of the great classics in Tamil. It is the masterpiece of Tamil literature and one of the highest and purest expression of human thought". This great didactic work in Tamil reveals the loftiest sentiments and the purest philosophy of life with equal power of conception and expression of the Tamil genius, Tiruvalluvar, the author of this work has been acclaimed as the "Bard" of universal man by Dr.G.V. Pope, an eminent missonary of Great Britain.

The supreme philosophy of life as conceived by the Tamils is clearly expressed in one of the verses of 'Purananuru, the ancient Tamil Classic

"Every country is my country
Every man is my kinsman"

In these lines, the ancient Tamils have given vibrant expression to their cherished ideal of the One world and the universal brotherhood of Man. From this oft-quoted epigram, one can infer that the Tamils have gone beyond the barriers of Class, Community, Nation and Religion and embraced the whole humanity as their brothren. There is hardly any parallel to this anticipation of One-world ideal and the 'universal brotherhood of man' in ancient countries.

Classical writers like Pliny, Ptolemy, the author of the Erythrean Sea and Strabo have recorded the brisk maritime trade between Tamil Nadu and the Western countries in the early centuries of the Christian era. In addition to pepper and rice, the other important goods exported from the Malabar (Chera) coast in great quantities were fine pearls, ivory, ginger, spikenard oil and gems. The names of these luxurious goods have found a plaque in the vocabulary of the Classical languagas as well as in the modern European languages. One such word is arid (rice), the staple food of Tamil Nadu and China from olden days. This word has found its way to Greece, where it was called Oryza. From this word, Oriza of Latin, riz of the French, rice of the English, rizo of the Italian and arrez. of the Spanish have derived. Another important ingredient added to the dishes to preserve for a few days and to make them delicious is Milaku which was called piperri in Greek, piper in Latin and pepper in the modern European languages.-This name appears to be corrupted form of Pippili, the long pepper in Tamil. Latin authors especially make frequent references to pepper, we can cite a significant example for this. Horace, with much delight, is apprehensive of his book being taken away to wrap up spices and pepper like impertinent writings which only deserve such a treatment. Ginger was also exported to the Western Countries. The people of Greece called it as zingiberi, and the Romans as gingiber, coming naturally from the Tamil word Inchiver i.e., the root of the green ginger. The Roman physicians, Dioscuridcs praises it as a good digestive and nice recipe and Auspicious records its frequent use as a food. The names of the sandal wood and pearl of Tamil Nadu are also derived their names from Canthu and Paral in the Western countries.

Aram[1230]. The integrity and honesty of the merchant communities revealed by the Sangam literature speak about the glory of the Tamils in their trade and commercial activities also.

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CONCLUSION

The foregoing research reveals the former fallen greatness of Sangam Tamils. The Sangam age is considered to be the golden age of the Tamils. The sangam literature and foreign accounts shed light on the political, social and economic life of ancient Tamils. The vast majority of the inhabitants led a tribal life yet sections of the people made considerable progress in their cultural pursuits. Tribalism exister together with urbanity and so also did villages and towns and minor chieftains and major powers. The determination of the age of Sangam Spavined from Fifth Century B.C. to second century.

The form of Government of ancient Tamils as gleaned out of literature is monarchy. The epithets for the king are Ko Kovalan, irai, iraivan and porunan. The words irai and iraivan have two meanings, God and king. These words are meaningful and helps to interpret the probable basis for the evolution of the administrative institution of monarchy.

The sangam works give a fairly much information on political changes in ancient Tamilagam. As in any other society the Tamils were divided into tribes with their own leaders, habits and pursuits. Through progress in settled life they came to possess particular territories and through conflicts and alliances transformed themselves into political powers. Tolkappiyar refers to twelve political divisions called nadu. By the Sangam age there came into existence three major powers referred to as muvender and number of smaller powers. The three major powers the pandyas in the south the Cholas in the east and the cheras in the west occupied. SanTamilNadu the land of the pure Tamil. A part from the three powers there existed a number of minor powers who exercised and Independent or Semi Independent status.

The physical texture of the ancient South Indian landscape with its mountains and rivers, and clearly defined contours have induced the Tamils to divide the landscape on the basis of geographical set up. The hilly tracts and the mountain